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THE

WELCH HEIRESS,

A

COMEDY.

THE SECOND EDITION.

London:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD WHITE, NO. 173, PICCADILLY.

1795.

PR
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1795

TO THE

EARL OF HARCOURT.

As I have attempted to write a Comedy at the flattering inſtigation of your Lordſhip, the following ſcenes have a natural claim to your protection. If, when you prompted and encouraged me to court the Comic Muſe, you had imparted to me at the ſame time ſome ſhare of your inſtinctive penetration into character---of your elegant, but impreſſive ridicule of faſhionable levities---had you conſigned to my hand the clue that guides you in the chace and detection of folly through the intricate windings of her labyrinth, I ſhould have preſented to you a Comedy more worthy of your attention. Such as it is, it offers me an opportunity of publickly acknowledging the high value I ſet upon a friendſhip, which I have had the happineſs of enjoying ſo many years.

I have the honor to be,

Your moſt obedient

Humble Servant,

EDWARD JERNINGHAM.

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PROLOGUE

TO THE

WELCH HEIRESS.

WRITTEN BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.

Spoken by Mr. Barrymore.

" SHOOT Folly as it flies." Such is the game,
At which, 'tis ſaid, the Comic Muſe ſhould aim;
The darker paſſions that the heart deform,
And ſpread o'er groaning ſtates the moral ſtorm,
Are pompous themes the ſportive Maid reſigns,
To ſwell her ſolemn Siſter's lofty lines.
Yet when ſhe fain would ſtrike ſuch tow'ring prey,
The ſerious Damſel takes the ſafeſt way;
Tho' proud yet prudent---wounding guilt too high,
To wake in you the ſelf-reproaching ſigh;
In ſluggiſh apathy you careleſs ſit,
Nor ſmart for crimes that you could ne'er commit:
But, in the comic province, who ſhall dare
To touch the faults that you may haply ſhare?
For conſcience then may ſtrengthen the appeal,
And bid you cruſh what forces her to feel.

For Virtue, zealous and diſdaining awe,
E'en fear'd by thoſe too mighty for the law,
The Stage, through ev'ry ſtation, Vice has try'd,
And honeſt Satire has her laſh applied.

Hence,

Hence, while the Comic Muſe muſt fear to wound,
She ſtill is doom'd to courſe o'er beaten ground;
Again bring forward what too well you know,
Or, if a novelty, ſome monſter ſhew.

To-night our Bard, who long has ſtruck the lyre,
A modeſt minſtrel of the plaintive choir,
Attempts for once a harmleſs laugh to raiſe,
More dreading cenſure than preſuming praiſe.
One point we fairly in his cauſe may plead---
For know, he dares to touch the ſcribbling breed;
Dares ſtrip from dull conceit its bold pretence,
And prove an Author may be void of ſenſe.
Then let your candour countenance the grace
That freely owns the follies of his race;
And ſure our Bard e'en Malice need not fear,
(Could Malice lurk in ſpecious ambuſh *here*)
E'en ſhe may yield her pittance of applauſe
To him whoſe vent'rous pen a brother draws;
For while thus ſportive on a ſcribbling elf,
Our ſimple Poet may deride himſelf.

The following Lines, written by the Rev. Mr. PRITCHARD, Jun. before he knew the Author was in poſſeſſion of another Prologue, contain too much Merit to be ſuppreſſed.

THERE liv'd at Argos once a youth of fame,
(So Horace tells) and Lycas was his name,
Who, (if there is a joy which mad men know,
And ſuch as madneſs only can beſtow)
By the ſtrong force of its prevailing pow'r,
Wak'd to freſh tranſport ev'ry new-born hour.
Each viſionary ſcene that fancy drew,
His mind embodied, and confirm'd it true.
Oft, in the height of his diſtemper's rage,
He ſaw, or fancy'd that he ſaw, a ſtage;
Where as he heard the ſelf-imagin'd ſound,
And trod, or thought he trod, dramatic ground;
Where, with nice ſkill in imitative art,
Each ſon of Theſpis ſeem'd to play his part,
The fond conceit drew down his loud applauſe,
As tho' reality had been the cauſe,
And ev'ry member, head, hands, lips, and eyes,
Profeſs'd their praiſe, and teſtified ſurprize.

If ſuch the charm where fancy gave delight,
Let truth, not fiction, plead our cauſe to-night;
And,

And, as I come to take a nearer view,
Pleading for him who ſtrives to pleaſure you,
Oh! may propitious Beauty* ſmile reward!
May Science † favour, and the Gods ‡ regard!

Sons of renown, the bards of ancient days,
Wore on their heads a circling crown of bays,
Theſe bloom eternal, for to them belong
The grace, the pride, the energies of ſong;
The tale well-told, the animated line,
The glow of ſentiment, and thought divine;
Yet ſtill there bloſſoms many a virgin flow'r,
On the fair ſpot where Genius rears her bow'r;
Of theſe our bard preſents before your view,
One of a ſimple, but unfully'd hue;
Should the mild off'ring kind acceptance ſhare,
Tis your's to weave the crown, and his to wear.

* To the Boxes. † To the Pit. ‡ To the Galleries.

CHARACTERS.

LORD MELCOURT	MR. PALMER.
MR. FASHION -	MR. BARRYMORE.
SIR PEPPER PLINLIMMON	MR. DODD.
MR. PHRENSY -	MR. BANNISTER, JUN.
MR. FANCY - -	MR. R. PALMER.
LADY BELLAIR -	MISS FARREN.
LADY PLINLIMMON	MISS POPE.
MISS PLINLIMMON	MRS. JORDAN.

SCENE---MELCOURT-HALL, near Town.

THE

WELCH HEIRESS,

A COMEDY.

ACT I.

Enter Lady BELLAIR---*Mr.* FASHION.

Mr. FASHION.

I AM happy at your Ladyſhip's arrival. We expected you laſt night.

Lady Bellair. I purpoſely avoided coming laſt night, that I might not be complicated in the embarraſſment of the Welch family's arrival, whom I underſtand came yeſterday. What ſort of creatures are they? How many did the caravan conſiſt of? I expect to ſee the whole race of Shenkin.

Mr. Faſh. Do not be alarmed as to their number; I will give your Ladyſhip a liſt of the *dramatis perſonæ*, and a faint ſketch of their characters.

Lady B. Pray do! for I have ſeen nobody, not even my brother, the *padrone della caſa.*

Mr. Faſh. Lord Melcourt, I know, is walked out; I was juſt enquiring after him. But to return to the ſubject;---Yeſterday evening, the family coach, covered with duſt, and much damaged by the toil and length of the journey, waddled up to

the hall-door in great labour, and was happily delivered of Sir Pepper Plinlimmon, Lady Plinlimmon, Miſs Plinlimmon, and a *femme de chambre*; two ſervants attended on Welch ponies. The coach, I muſt inform you, contained originally five perſons, but it miſcarried on the road of Mr. Taffey, their chaplain, who could not bear the inſide of a carriage. He is, however, expected to-morrow, in the baſket of ſome ſtage-coach.

Lady B. I fancy we ſhall be able to do without Mr. Taffey.

Mr. Faſh. Indeed you are miſtaken. He is one of the eſſential perſonages in our drama, for he is to join the hands of Lord Melcourt and Miſs Plinlimmon.

Lady B. What ſort of a thing is the girl?

Mr. Faſh. She is very well as to beauty; her ſhape elegantly and harmoniouſly formed, but when in motion, ungraceful. Her mind is a compound of ignorance and information, like the waving branches that give a checquered kind of light. She made us laugh laſt night at ſupper with the childiſh ſimplicity of her queſtions, and ſometimes ſhe excited our admiration at the quickneſs of her repartee, and the ſolidity of her judgment; in a word, ſhe appears to be an inſpired ideot.

Lady B. Now let me have the portrait of Sir Pepper.

Mr. Faſh. Sir Pepper is a plain, unaſſuming man, ſubject at times to a warmth of temper, and whoſe local train of impoveriſhed ideas are quite unſuitable to the ſcene he is now entering upon, and to the company with which he is now to aſſociate. His mind has received a peculiar biaſs reſpecting the prophecies that have been floating of late, and he is almoſt convinced the world will be at an end before his daughter has brought Lord Melcourt a ſon and heir.

Lady

Lady B. I confeſs, I like the whimſicallity of that notion; it will ſerve to amuſe us.

Mr. Faſh. As for Lady Plinlimmon, ſhe has a conſiderable ſhare of vanity; half of which ſhe ſpends in admiration of her daughter-in-law, the other ſhe conſumes upon herſelf. She imagines ſhe has a refined taſte for literature, that ſhe is a ſupreme judge of painting, and---

Lady B. Oh! then ſhe is intolerable.

Mr. Faſh. By no means. There is a broad good-humour about her which makes her inoffenſive. She looks with impatience for the honour of cementing an acquaintance with your Ladyſhip.

Lady B. I think, from your deſcription, it will not be unentertaining to paſs a day or two with theſe Welch Emigrants. But does my brother ſeem happy at his approaching nuptials?

Mr. Faſh. Yeſterday he ſeemed at firſt overcome by the invaſion of theſe Vandals; but his native mirth rallied, and at the cloſe of the evening he was himſelf again. But here he comes.

Enter Lord MELCOURT.

Lord Mel. Siſter, you are welcome! You look in high beauty. The elegant circles in town will be eclipſed without you. Have you ſeen our new kindred?

Lady B. Not yet. Mr. Faſhion has been giving me a ſlight ſketch of them.

Lord Mel. Well, I am ready to conſign Sir Pepper, and Lady Plinlimmon to the full diſcharge of your raillery; but ſpare, I intreat you, my ſhepherdeſs of the Alps.

Lady B. Never fear; never fear.

Lord Mel. Lady Plinlimmon looks for your arrival with all the flutter of anxious expectation. Your fame, like an artful prologue, has ſmoothed

the

the way to a kind reception: ſhe talks of you as the paragon of excellence; ſhe will ſtudy your whole perſon; obſerve every motion, attitude, and every article of your dreſs.

Mr. Faſh. Lady Bellair may be ſaid to be a capital picture from the gallery of faſhion, for Lady Plinlimmon to copy.

Lady B. I will venture to ſay, without the impeachment of vanity, that the copy will not come up to the merit of the original.

Mr. Faſh. Your Ladyſhip is perfectly right.

Lady B. But tell me, brother, don't you feel, independent of the charms of your young bride, an uncommon elaſticity of mind in the removal of the incumbrances which this marriage will effect?

Lord Mel. Yes. Upon that ground I plant the ſtandard of my gaudieſt ſtreamer. I have had a private conference with Sir Pepper, and his immediate relinquiſhing of his Brecknockſhire eſtate will enable me to part with my Iriſh acres, and ſatisfy all my noiſy claimants; who, like a voracious pack of hounds, have chaced me from hill to dale, and notwithſtanding the windings of excuſes, and the intricate mazes of delay, would have ſoon overtaken me, had not this golden ſhower from the Welch mountains put an end to the chace.

Lady B. Bravo! Are we to expect any more company?

Lord Mel. I have invited my friend Fancy, the miniature-painter. I expect alſo Phrenſy, the poet, whom you have often heard me talk of; he will ſuit Lady Plinlimmon, and their mutual eccentricities will divert us.

Mr. Faſh. I am glad that oddity will be added to the group; you have frequently amuſed me with anecdotes concerning him. When will he be here?

Lord Mel. I expect him every minute. He writes word he will be here to-day, but begs his coming

coming may be a ſecret; and, as he is not perſonnally known to any body but myſelf, he deſires to aſſume the name of Tombſtone.

Mr. Faſh. What a whim! What can he mean?

Lord M. Moſt likely he is afraid of his creditors---however, do not betray him to the reſt of our ſociety. But here come our Welch relatives, (*Enter Sir* PEPPER PLINLIMMON, *Lady* PLINLIMMON, *and Miſs* PLINLIMMON.) Give me leave to preſent Lady Bellair, to your Ladyſhip.

Lady Plin. Independent of the connection that is taking place between our families, I rejoice at the opportunity that now offers of commencing an acquaintance with Lady Bellair.

Lady B. Your Ladyſhip does me a great deal of honour. I hope Sir Pepper, you will like this part of the world ſufficiently to engage you to ſtay among us ſome time.

Lady Plin. What eaſe! What elegance! (*Aſide.*

Sir P. Plin. I ſhould wiſh to enjoy your Ladyſhip's ſociety, but I am rather diſpoſed to return as ſoon as I can; for if, as Noſtradamus ſays, we are in the fifth act I ſhould like to be at home when the curtain drops.

Lady Plin. Dear Sir Pepper, do not cloud the ſplendour of Lady Bellair's mind, with the dark miſts of your odious prophecies.

Lady B. I beg your Ladyſhip will let Sir Pepper ſay what he chooſes, I am not eaſily alarmed: credulity is not my foible. But this is a converſation of too ſevere a caſt for our young bride: you, my dear, may ſend your expecting eye through a long and gay perſpective.

Miſs P. So I do! I expect to have fine cloaths, to go to a great many balls, and I expect to be married!

Sir P. Plin. Your Ladyſhip will exuſe the wild ſimplicity of my daughter.

Lady B.

Lady B. Oh! I am a great admirer of artleſs ſimplicity; it is as rare to be met with as ſincerity.

Lady Plin. When ſhe has exchanged the rude breezes of the mountain where ſhe was bred, for the gentler gales of poliſhed ſociety, ſhe will aſſimilate with the ſoft elegance of her new ſituation.

Mr. Faſh. Lady Bellair herſelf could not have invented a metaphor more happily alluſive.

Sir P. Plin. My wife is very metaphori*call.*

Miſs Plin. Yes! we all have our different *calls*; mamma is metaphori*call*---papa is prophetic*all*---I am comi*call*---the old curate, near Plinlimmon Caſtle, is claſſi*call*, and his wife is dropſi*call!*

Lady Plin. You muſt check this careleſs volubility.

Lord Mel. Suppoſe, gentlemen, we leave the ladies to confer by themſelves. Will you allow me, Sir Pepper, to ſhew you the Vandyke I mentioned laſt night?

Sir P. Plin. If you pleaſe.

(*Exeunt Sir* PEPPER, *Mr.* FASHION, *Lord* MELCOURT.

Lady Plin. I ſhould wiſh your Ladyſhip not to be impreſſed with an idea that my daughter-in-law is deficient in the great outline of education, though ſhe has not yet received the laſt touchings of embelliſhment. I myſelf have been her tutoreſs, and have read to her ſeveral of the beſt Engliſh authors.

Miſs Plin. And all the Welch poets.

Lady B. I am perſuaded Miſs Plinlimmon is deficient in nothing that is abſolutely requiſite for the ſtation ſhe is going to aſcend: as for thoſe delicate finiſhings, that faſhionable elegance demands---

Lady Plin. Your Ladyſhip's ſociety will ſupply. I conſign this young Alpine plant to your care: 'tis yours to give the pliant branches their proper direction, and to breathe on them a playful air of eaſy negligence. With your permiſſion, I will now with-

withdraw for the purpoſe of my girls imbibing from your Ladyſhip thoſe nameleſs graces you only can beſtow. (*Exit Lady* PLINLIMMON.

Miſs Plin. What are thoſe things mamma ſays you are to beſtow upon me?

Lady B. My friendſhip! And you in return muſt have ſome friendſhip for me, and ſpeak to me with confidence upon every point that relates to your marriage with my brother. By what he has ſaid to me, I find he is extremely attached to you: I hope his attachment will meet with an equal return on your part.

Miſs Plin. That is as it may be.

Lady B. I am ſure Lord Melcourt is reckoned by all the ladies very handſome, amiable, entertaining, and ---

Miſs Plin. I know all that, and I ſhould be very partial to him, if ---

Lady B. If what, my dear?

Miſs Plin. If---

Lady B. Has he done any thing to offend you?

Miſs Plin. No! but he has done nothing to pleaſe me.

Lady B. Does he appear to neglect you? I recollect he was uncommonly aſſiduous in writing to you laſt winter.

Miſs Plin. Oh yes! he frequently wrote to me, and he uſed to ſay in his letters, that when I ſhould come to Melcourt Hall, we ſhould wander through the groves together, and he would ſay ſuch tender things to me by the river-ſide. Now we were by the river-ſide yeſterday evening, and ſcarce one word did he ſay to me, but converſed with my papa about the winding of his river; egad! I wiſh it was wound round his neck.

Lady B. Fie, child! You muſt not imagine that Lord Melcourt's attention is to be totally devoted to you.

Miſs

Miſs Plin. Am I then not to expect any ſhare of his converſation? Is there to be no time for wooing? no flirtation? no whiſpering? no toying? no innocent anticipation?

Lady B. Miſs Plinlimmon, the manufacturing of love in Wales may perhaps be as coarſe as a ſackcloth, but in this part of the world, the cupids of faſhion weave the fine texture with a light and inviſible hand.

Miſs Plin. Inviſible indeed! But if I am never to partake of his company, what am I come here for? what ſhall I be the better for being married to him? where is the advantage?

Lady B. You will obtain the advantage of his name and title; you will move in a higher ſphere.

Miſs Plin. But I always underſtood, that wedlock was a kind of travelling through life together?

Lady B. So it is, but then it is like travelling in the double ſtage-coach; you go the ſame journey together, without ſeeing or incommoding one another.

Miſs Plin. I hate the double ſtage-coach; I like a vis-a-vis much better. However, if Lord Melcourt does not become more aſſiduous, he may be ſupplanted---Faſhion is much more attentive.

Enter Lord MELCOURT.

Lord Mel. I aſk pardon for interrupting you; but the odd character I ſpoke of is arrived; he begs to ſee me in private; he is now coming.

Lady B. We will retire immediately.

(Exeunt Lady BELLAIR *and Miſs* PLINLIMMON.

Enter

Enter ſervant---announces Mr. TOMBSTONE.---
Enter Mr. PHRENSY.

Mr. Phrenſy. Your ſervant---I am obliged to you for your invitation---I have an epithalamium for the occaſion; ſhall I read it?

Lord Mel. All in good time: tell me firſt why you aſſume another name?

Mr. Phrenſy. You ſhall hear, but do not betray me.

Lord Mel. You may rely upon me.

Mr. Phrenſy. Shall not I read the epithalamium firſt?

Lord Mel. No, no! I am impatient for your hiſtory?

Mr. Phrenſy. Well, you ſhall hear it---but I am certain you will be pleaſed with the epithalamium.

Lord Mel. I have no doubt, but let me know the ſecret motive of your changing your name, before we are interrupted.

Mr. Phrenſy. Do you think your ſervants will know me?

Lord Mel. I have an entire new ſet.

Mr. Phrenſy. That makes me happy.

Lord Mel. Was it the fear of your creditors?

Mr. Phrenſy. No ſuch terreſtrial motive urged me to aſſume another name: this liberty I have taken with myſelf flows from a more ſublime cauſe, than the apprehenſion of bailiffs! I will now diſcloſe the myſtery---unleſs you chooſe to hear the epithalamium firſt---

Lord Mel. Do not trifle any longer, but let me know the purport of this myſterious conduct.

Mr. Phrenſy. Envy, which attends living authors, has purſued me with great implacability.

Lord Mel. I do not recollect that I ever heard your works cenſured.

Mr. Phrenſy. Likely enough---cenſure would have excited notice---notice would have led to obſervation---obſervation to juſtice---juſtice to admiration---no no! Envy, my Lord took another method with me, ſhe ſome how or other, contrived to breathe over me and my works a dread repoſe. The warehouſe where my productions are depoſited, reſembles a family vault where all my numerous progeny are at reſt! And are only diſtinguiſhed from one another by labels---ſuch as Phrenſy's comedies--Phrenſy's tragedies--Phrenſy's ſatires---Phrenſy's ---

Lord Mel. But what has all this to do with the changing of your name?

Mr. Phrenſy. I am now coming to the mark: my friends have ſoothed me with the idea, that poſterity will do me juſtice---that poſterity will ſay to theſe ſleepers, ariſe! Then will my comedies, my tragedies, my odes, ſhake off their duſt and dazzle the admiring world.

Lord Mel. What is all this to the purpoſe?

Mr. Phrenſy. You ſhall hear---inſtead of patiently waiting the natural proceſs of time, I conceived a ſtratagem of anticipating my triumphs, and of taking a ſhort cut to poſterity.

Lord Mel. How do you mean---by cutting your throat?

Mr. Phrenſy. 'Tis done, 'tis done---

Lord Mel. What's done?

Mr. Phrenſy. I have killed myſelf; that is to ſay I have given out that I am dead. This is the reaſon for changing my name---envy was never played ſuch a trick before---

Lord Mel. But why take the melancholy name of Tombſtone?

Mr. Phrenſy. That is to keep me in recollection that I am dead.

Lord

Lord Mel. There is ſenſe in that.

Mr. Phrenſy. But this ſtratagem, my Lord, has not yet anſwered my ſanguine expectation.

Lord Mel. How ſo?

Mr. Phrenſy. I have been three weeks dead, and would you believe that there has not been in any of the papers, an elegy, a poſthumous puff, or a line in my commendation.

Lord Mel. That is very ſtrange.

Mr. Phrenſy. Egad! A tallow-chandler might have ſlipt out of the world, as eaſily as I have done.

Lord Mel. How did you inſert your death in the papers, for it eſcaped my notice.

Mr. Phrenſy. Simply thus---yeſterday died, univerſally lamented, the eminent poet, Claſſical Phrenſy, Eſq.

Lord Mel. To be ſure, nothing could be more ſimple and modeſt---but I have an idea, that I think will ſerve your ſcheme better---I will have it inſerted in the papers, and you ſhall draw up the paragragh, to this purpoſe---yeſterday the eminent poet, Claſſical Phrenſy, Eſq. died ſuddenly, at Melcourt-Hall, where he was upon a viſit to his friend, Lord Melcourt.

Mr. Phrenſy. Very good---excellent conception.

Lord Mel. The circumſtance of making your exit at my country-houſe, during the intereſting moment of my nuptials, will give your death an eclat.

Mr. Phrenſy. This ſecond edition of my death, with additions, will do admirably faith, but what will your company ſay, when they ſhall read the paragraph?

Lord Mel. I ſhall take particular care, that none of them ſhall ſee it.

Mr. Phrenſy. But what does your Lordſhip ſmile at?

Lord Mel. Another idea occurs, which will ſerve to enrich the paragraph---

Mr. Phrenſy. As how?

Lord Mel. Fancy, the miniature-painter, will be here to day---I ſhall tell him as a profound ſecret that you lie dead in the houſe, and that it is unknown to the company---and I will beg of him, as you are my friend, to take a faint ſketch of you---

Mr. Phrenſy. This will, as your Lordſhip ſays, enrich the paragraph, which may run thus---Mr. Phrenſy being the intimate friend of Lord Melcourt, an eminent painter from town was ſent for, to take a likeneſs of the great poet.

Lord Mel. Admirable! You have only to whiten your face, and make yourſelf like a ghoſt in an opera, the painter ſhall only peep at you, and then finiſh the ſketch from memory---truſt to my contrivance, you ſhall not be detected.

Mr. Phrenſy. I will go and prepare the paragraph. (*Phrenſy going, returns*) your Lordſhip then does not wiſh to hear the epithalamium firſt?

Lord Mel. No, no! I expect the painter every minute. (*Exit Mr.* PHRENSY.) Self conceit---good humour---with abſurdity, are happily blended in that man's compoſition.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Fancy is arrived---

Lord Mel. Bid him come in---

Enter

Enter Mr. FANCY.

Mr. Fancy. I wiſh your Lordſhip joy, I flatter myſelf you have not ſent for me, to be an idle ſpectator---I hope I ſhall have the honor of drawing the bride.

Lord Mel. Moſt aſſuredly---the art ſuffers when you are idle.

Mr. Fancy. Have you aſſembled many of your friends upon this occaſion?

Lord Mel. No---Lady Bellair is come, and Mr. Faſhion, and a literary acquaintance of mine, Mr. Tombſtone.

Mr. Fancy. I never heard of his name.

Lord Mel. He has lived a great deal abroad, he is lately returned from Africa; I had another ingenious man here, and he was my particular friend, but a ſudden death has deprived me of that invaluable perſon: what I am going to relate, is a ſecret, nobody is acquainted with the terrible accident, except a confidential ſervant. Poor Phrenſy, the poet, died ſuddenly laſt night; he is now in the houſe, and is to be removed this evening: I ſhould be happy to have a reſemblance of my old friend, and if you would have the goodneſs to take a haſty ſketch of him, you would infinitely oblige me.

Mr. Fancy. I can have no objection.

Lord Mel. Let all this tranſaction be as ſecret as the grave.

Mr. Fancy. You may depend upon me.

Enter Mr. PHRENSY, *with a paper.*

Mr. Phrenſy. Here is the paragraph for your inſpection.

Lord

Lord Mel. (*taking the paper*) I ſhall look at it another time. Let me have the ſatisfaction of introducing two gentlemen to one another, who are formed for each other's acquaintance; Mr. Tombſtone, let me preſent you to Mr. Fancy. I muſt now beg permiſſion to leave you together; I ſhall return in a few moments. (*Exit Lord* MELCOURT.

Mr. Fancy. I am happy in commencing an acquaintance with ſo ingenious a gentleman. I ſhould be proud to draw your portrait.

Mr. Phrenſy. (*Smiling*) You ſhall, Mr. Fancy. I ſuppoſe the bride is to be embelliſhed by your pencil?

Mr. Fancy. Of courſe. But Lord Melcourt did not ſend for me merely to paint the young lady.

Mr. Phrenſy. Your pencil will undoubtedly run through the whole family.

Mr. Fancy. Likely enough. But I have another meaning. I am ſent for---I am ſure Mr. Tombſtone may be truſted; and as the firſt fruits of my friendſhip for you, I will depoſit in your breaſt a profound ſecret.

Mr. Phrenſy. I will in return communicate to you, the firſt ſecret that is whiſpered in my ear.

Mr. Fancy. I have, then, to inform you, that there is a perſon lies dead in the houſe, and Lord Melcourt has begged I would juſt catch a reſemblance of his departed friend.

Mr. Phrenſy. Who is it?

Mr. Fancy. Phrenſy, the poet!

Mr. Phrenſy. Indeed! Is that great and unrivalled man no more?

Mr. Fancy. You are too magnificent in the epithets you apply to Mr. Phrenſy.

Mr. Phrenſy. By no means! Reflect what an awful taſk is now impoſed upon you! Methinks I

ſee

ſee you advance, with ſublime emotion, towards the honoured couch that bears the breathleſs image of that immortal man!

Mr. Fancy. But whence this enthuſiaſm? After all it muſt be confeſſed, that the friendſhip of Lord Melcourt was the higheſt feather in his cap.

Mr. Phrenſy. Talk not to me of feather, or of cap! His head was encircled with laurel, wove by the public hand! For ſhame Mr. Fancy, is it thus you revere the illuſtrious dead?

Mr. Fancy. Don't be ſo warm, Mr. Tombſtone, I am perhaps a little ungenerous in ſpeaking againſt the dead who cannot defend themſelves: but tell me diſpaſſionately, do you admire poor Phrenſy's writings?

Mr. Phrenſy. I do! I know them by heart, have you a mind to hear the ſixteenth ſcene of his tragi-comedy, in ſix acts, where the princeſs catches her.---

Mr. Fancy. No, no! I will not give you the trouble of repeating your friend's verſes.

Mr. Phrenſy. My friend's verſes! you ſay right, yes my intimate friend; he never wrote a line without conſulting me.

Mr. Fancy. But if he was ſo dear a friend, how comes it you are not more affected by his death?

Mr. Phrenſy. I am aſtoniſhed, ſtunned, bewildered at the dreadful ſecret you diſcloſed! When the firſt impreſſion is ſubſided, grief will ſucceed: Lord Melcourt out of affection for me ſecreted the melancholy event, but I begin to feel myſelf overpowered. (*goes aſide with his handkerchief to his eyes.*

Enter Lord MELCOURT.

Lord Mel. What is the matter with Mr. Tombſtone?

Mr.

Mr. Fancy. Inadvertantly I informed him of the death of Mr. Phrenſy, not knowing the intimacy that ſubſiſted between them.

Lord Mel. How could you be ſo imprudent? (*goes up to Mr. Phrenſy*) Dear Tombſtone, do not yield to this inordinate affliction.

Mr. Phrenſy. How can I command my grief? (*throws his arms round Lord Melcourt's neck.*)

Lord Mel. I take no inconſiderable ſhare in your diſtreſs.

Mr. Phrenſy. Undoubtedly you do, in looſing Mr. Phrenſy, you loſe your panegyriſt---think how often he has regaled your Lordſhip with the thickeſt cream of dedication.

Lord Mel. Forbear to remind me, you affect me too much.

Mr. Fancy. What a ſituation I am in! I thought I was invited to the abode of feſtivity, inſtead of which, I am come into the houſe of mourning; I had better return to town.

Lord Mel. By no means! When this mutual ſympathetic emotion is over, we ſhall return to our former mirth.

Mr Fancy. Your Lordſhip appeared very eaſy and jocund juſt now.

Lord Mel. You then ſaw me during the intervals of the firſt and ſecond paroxiſm of grief.

Mr. Fancy. Is then your Lordſhip's affliction methodiſed into acts like a play, with pauſes between the diviſions.

Lord Mel. Indeed Mr. Fancy, this is not a moment for raillery, let me entreat you to leave us, we ſhall be more compoſed preſently.

Mr. Fancy. Well, I will obey your commands! (*Exit.*

Lord MELCOURT *and Mr.* PHRENSY *burſt into laughing.*

Lord

Lord Mel. We ſhall have ſtill more entertainment with the painter, when he has drawn your picture.

Mr. Phrenſy. I am impatient for that ſcene, I will go and prepare myſelf.

Lord Mel. My valet de chambre, who has my inſtructions, and who is in our confidence will aſſiſt and furniſh you with whatever is neceſſary for the purpoſe, I muſt now join the company.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Lord MELCOURT---*Mr.* FANCY, *with a pallet in his hand---a couch at ſome diſtance, on which Mr.* PHRENSY *lies, diſguiſed as dead.*

Lord Mel. Shall we now approach the venerable remains of the great man.

Mr. Fancy. Give me leave to mingle my colours a little.

Lord Mel. I am afraid the taſk I have impoſed upon you, is unpleaſant: you feel, I make no doubt, very diſagreeable ſenſations upon this occaſion.

Mr. Fancy. Not in the leaſt, a lifeleſs frame does not impreſs me with any diſturbance; I drew Lady Fidget's dead monkey the other day without any kind of perturbation.

Lord Mel. But, Mr. Fancy, do you make no diſtinction between Lady Fidget's dead monkey, and the remains of my friend?

Mr. Fancy. As he was your friend, I reſpect him, but does your Lordſhip really think he is worthy of thoſe encomiums, that you and Mr. Tombſtone, ſo profuſely beſtowed upon him?

Lord Mel. My partiality may perhaps caſt a little ſuffuſion over my judgment. But tell me, do you

you not venerate his memory? Do you not admire his works?

Mr. Fancy. Perhaps as much as your Lordſhip, 'tis impoſſible with ſo refined an underſtanding as yours to receive any entertainment from his writings; the characters in his plays, for example, may be compared to the incongruities that we meet with on ſign-poſts: things that never exiſted in nature, ſuch as blue boars, black ſwans, dragons, and mermaids---I never felt a more pleaſing invitation to a ſlumber, than I did at his laſt comedy, which unfortunately I did not enjoy long, for I was rouſed by a thouſand cat-calls.

(*Mr.* PHRENSY *ſtarts up from the couch.*)

Mr Phrenſy. 'Tis falſe, 'tis falſe, no cat-call was heard at my comedy, though I am dead, I am not damned---

Mr. Fancy. (*Recovering from his fright*) I perceive it was a trick.

Mr. Phrenſy. Trick or no trick, my works will live when the memory of Lady Fidget, her monkey and yourſelf, will be ſwept from the face of the earth---baſe calumniator---

Lord Mel. I beg I may be the negociator of peace between the living and the dead; in the firſt place I can aſſure Mr. Fancy no indignity was meant to him---Mr. Phrenſy, for particular reaſons, having given out that he was dead, I thought a portrait of the author, by a celebrated painter, would add luſtre to the poſthumous edition of his works.

Mr. Fancy. Then I forgive him. (*Runs to embrace him.*

Mr. Phrenſy. But tell me firſt, how can I forgive the ſcurrilous obſervations you ſo liberally beſtowed upon my compoſitions?

Lord Mel. Dear Phrenſy, you do not imagine that the painter was in earneſt---flatter him a little (*aſide to Fancy.*

Mr. Fancy. I hope I am not ſo deſtitute of taſte. So far from ſleeping at your comedy, I diſturbed the boxes with my peals of laughter.

Mr Phrenſy. Give me your hand.

Mr. Fancy. Then the parts were ſo chequered with ſentimental and pathetic paſſages.

Mr. Phrenſy. Excuſe me, there was nothing pathetic in my comedy, nor any thing like ſentiment.

Mr. Fancy. I only mean in the winding up of your comedy, where the butcher's daughter kneels.

Mr. Phrenſy. My dear Sir, you are ſpeaking of my tragedy.

Lord Mel. Phrenſy, you muſt excuſe him---Fancy's mind has not yet recovered from the confuſion, your ſudden burſting from the dead occaſioned! You had better retire and relapſe into Tombſtone.

Mr. Phrenſy. I will follow your direction---and as you, Mr. Fancy, are acquainted with my ſecret hiſtory---let us for the future be friends.

(*Exit Mr.* PHRENSY.

Mr. Fancy. Now we are alone---I muſt declare you was rather too hard upon me, in expoſing me as you did to the indignation of the enraged poet---

Lord Mel. I only intended a little innocent ſport, I did not think he would have ruſhed upon us ſo rudely, it was his irritability in hearing himſelf abuſed, that made him riſe from the dead.

Mr. Fancy. Then it was my own doing, for the abuſe was all mine: I muſt now prepare to draw the living; the ladies I believe, are now waiting for me.

Lord

Lord Mel. I will follow you---

(*Exit Mr.* FANCY.

Enter Mr. FASHION.

Lord Mel. I wiſh, Faſhion, you had been here ſometime ago---we had an excellent ſcene between the painter and the dead poet---the painter was almoſt in an hyſteric.

Mr. Faſhion. I think theſe two characters will afford us ſtill more entertainment.

Lord Mel. I hope ſo---for I want ſomething to draw off my attention, and to prevent me from fixing too ſteady an eye upon this bride of mine, I ſhall be aſhamed to introduce her among my acquaintance next winter.

Mr. Faſh. Do not be under any apprehenſion, the inſtructions of Lady Bellair, Mrs. Townlife, and Lady Angelica Worthleſs, will refine the rude ſimplicity of your wild mountain-girl.

Lord Mel. Though I have a high opinion of thoſe able modern profeſſors, I am inclined to think this Welch girl will baffle all their ſkill, ſhe will never through them, as through filtering ſtones, diveſt herſelf of the heterogeneous matter, the heavy particles, the nauſeous lees ſhe has imbibed from her country education, from the manners of Sir Pepper, and from the vulgarity of the mother-in-law---no, no, 'tis impoſſible---

Mr. Faſh. I aſk your pardon---when ſhe has been decanted off into poliſhed ſociety ſhe will leave the dregs behind.

Lord Mel. I wiſh it may be ſo---I muſt now look for the painter, who is going to draw the portrait of my bride elect.

Mr. Faſh. I will not detain you.

(*Exeunt*

SCENE.

SCENE---*The Saloon. Lady Plinlimmon, Miſs Plinlimmon.*

Lady Plin. I beg you will put on your beſt looks and ſit patiently to the painter, that Lord Melcourt may have a good reſemblance of you.

Miſs Plin. What does he want my picture for? will he not ſee me morning, noon, and night? 'tis not likely he ſhould forget my face: or is it to hang me in effigy, in caſe I ſhould run away from him?

Lady Plin. It is uſual for the bride to preſent her portrait to the bridegroom, ſo I beg you will make no difficulty about it.

Enter Lord MELCOURT *and* Mr. FANCY.

Mr. Fancy. I hope I do not intrude upon your Ladyſhip?

Lady Plin. By no means.

Mr. Fancy. This is the hour your Ladyſhip appointed, and I confeſs I am impatient to commence the flattering taſk, but to do juſtice to the charms of that young lady, no pencil can have the preſumption.

Miſs Plin. The painter, I find, mamma, ſays finer things than the lover.

Lord Mel. It is part of his profeſſion to talk the language of bombaſt, and inordinate adulation: It becomes my ſituation to ſhew reſpect, a delicate reſerve, a genuine but not an importunate attachment, a calm not a tempeſtuous ſolicitude; in one word, a ſilent adoration.

Miſs Plin. Silent enough! egad I believe your adoration has a lock jaw.

Lady Plin. Fie child! don't talk ſo ridiculouſly; pray Mr. Fancy in what coſtume ſhall my daughter be drawn?

Mr. Fancy. Perhaps Miſs Plinlimmon will point out herſelf what character ſhe prefers.

Miſs Plin. I hope Mr. Fancy will give my face

face a good character, for it has done no harm.

Mr. Fancy. I ask your pardon, it has done a great deal of harm; but if my opinion was consulted, I should recommend to Miss Plinlimmon to be painted in the attitude of reading.

Miss Plin. I should like to be drawn reading, for I know I have a pretty down-cast look

Lady Plin. I must not forget to inform you that all the females of the Plinlimmon's have had a family mole, a little above the left eye, for these two centuries: Now Isabella's is too complicated with the eye-brow; perchance you can make some slight alteration.

Mr Fancy. By the omnipotence of the pencil we can raise the beauty spot, and place it in view.

Lord Mel. But is not that departing from reality? is it not a deceit? a kind of pencil lie?

Mr. Fancy. It is only changing the local resemblance, it is at the worst a skilful and elegant inaccuracy; the beauty-spot is there, I make no addition to what nature has already done, I only bring to the eye of admiration, what her Ladyship informs me nature has rather removed from the sight.

Lady Plin. I declare Mr. Fancy, you defend yourself most ingeniously, does he not my Lord?

Lord Mel. Most skilfully indeed!

Mr. Fancy. I have taken a much greater licence than this, without feeling any reproach of conscience; for example, when I had the honor of drawing Lady Frizlerump, I broke the immeasurable length of her bald buff forehead, by introducing two moles and a patch, the patch you know is a thing ad libitum, and as I knew Lady Frizlerump had a mole on each shoulder, I removed them from their native spot, (they were well worth the carriage) and I placed them in a more conspicuous situation; there is no great deceit in this, it is only a kind

a kind of tranſplanting, which ought to be as allowable in painting as in gardening.

Lord Mel. Well ladies, you perceive how ſportfully Mr. Fancy diſcourſes, he has a mind to give you a ſpecimen of his manner of entertaining his company, when they are ſitting to him.

Lady Plin. But I think, before we come to any determination about the dreſs, it would be proper to conſult the attic taſte of Lady Bellair.

Mr. Fancy. Moſt aſſuredly, you may ſhew her theſe miniatures which I have lately finiſhed. This is the portrait of Miſs Harelip, *(gives the miniatures)* which attracted the public eye the laſt exhibition. This is only a profile of Miſs Woolſack, the Judge's daughter.

Lady Plin. I will not detain you any longer at preſent.

M. Fancy. I will wait upon your Ladyſhip, whenever you will favour me with your commands.

(*Exit* Mr. FANCY.

Miſs Plin. But why does your Lordſhip wiſh ſo much to have my picture, ſince I am to live with you? do you want me duplicated? don't you think one Miſs Plinlimmon will be enough for you?

Lord Melcourt. The mutual exchange of pictures, is one of the etiquettes of modern marriages.

Lady Plin. Marriage itſelf may be ſaid to be a mutual exchange of attention, Indulgence, and affection.

Miſs Plin. In this mutual exchange, pray my Lord, inform me which of us two will be the gainer?

Lord Mel. If there is any calculation to be made, I am undoubtedly the gainer.

Miſs Plin. give me leave to calculate my loſſes; in marrying your Lordſhip I loſe my name---I loſe the ſociety of papa and mamma---I ſhall perhaps, loſe my ſhape---and perhaps, in time, loſe my reputation.

Lady

Lady Plin. Peace to that flippant tongue of yours, you are trying his Lordſhip's patience before the time. A I muſt carry theſe miniatures to Lady Bellair, your Lordſhip will excuſe my leaving you---Iſabella go to your papa---

(*Exeunt Lady* PLINLIMMON *and Miſs* PLINLIMMON.

Lord Mel. Heaven and earth! What a family am I going to be connected with! But I muſt not pauſe upon that thought, it would almoſt lead me to diſtraction.

(*Exit Lord* MELCOURT.

SCENE---*Lady* BELLAIR's *Apartment.*

Lady BELLAIR---*Lady* PLINLIMMON.

Lady Bell. Here is a miniature of myſelf, which was drawn when I was married, I think the dreſs would ſuit Miſs Plinlimmon.

Lady Plin. (*Taking the miniature.*) 'Tis beautiful, nor could it be otherwiſe, while it preſumed to have any reſemblance of your Ladyſhip---but you juſt now mentioned your marriage, I know that you and Lord Bellair were ſeparated not long after; intereſted as I am in whatever relates to your Ladyſhip, do not imagine it is mere curioſity that ſolicits ſome illuſtration upon that point.

Lady Bell. I am ready to give you every information, and the more ſo, as ill-nature, that monotonous and dull commentator, may have conſtrued our ſeparation in her invariable manner.

Lady Plin. I am all attention.

Lady Bell. Lord Bellair, ſomewhat advanced in years, palled, and ſatiated with the pleaſures of the town, began to meditate a retreat; but before he retired into the country, from which he was never

to return, he ranged through all the gay ſcenes of public reſort, to find a youthful aſſociate, to accompany him in his retirement.

Lady Plin. Your myſterious hiſtory begins to unfold itſelf; the beauteous flower that flouriſhed in the bright ſunſhine of admiration, grew pale and cheerleſs when it was tranſplanted to the ſolitary gloom of the country.

Lady B. I muſt confeſs your Ladyſhip's extemporary apologue compriſes my little ſtory, and makes my continuation unneceſſary.

Lady Plin. Not at all---I beg you will continue your intereſting narrative.

Lady B. Lord Bellair, amidſt the innumerable beauties, that at once attracted and bewildered his choice, threw at length his ſelecting glance upon me.

Lady Plin. His choice did honor to his taſte.

Lady B. It did not however contribute to his happineſs---the ſingle voice of my reluctance was loſt in the chorus of approbation that reſounded from all my relations and friends---I then ſummoned all the fortitude I was capable of, and took a courageous leave of the town---adieu, I cried, to the flattery of men---to the pleaſing envy of the women---adieu to balls---adieu to the delight of charioteering in a phaeton through St. James's Street every morning---adieu to the eaſy inſtructions of the town, to the contemplation of manners in caracature-ſhops, to the reading of Shakeſpear upon canvaſs, and to the ſtudy of the Engliſh hiſtory upon walls---the fatal hour arrived---the carriage was at the door---

Lady Plin. You really excite my compaſſion! What enſued when you reached the ancient family ſeat?

Lady B. Say rather the family vault!---I wrapt myſelf up in my reſignation, as in a winding ſheet, and thought to have buried myſelf in a huſband---

the

the fates decreed otherwiſe: I broke forth from the ponderous marble, beneath which I was quietly inurned, and am come again to reſide among the living.

Lady Plin. The world is a conſiderable gainer by enjoying you once more. Fortunate was the ſtorm that blew ſuch a flower upon the lap of ſociety. But whence aroſe that ſtorm? Did it ariſe from Lord Bellair's ill-temper? however, I am not curious; indeed I can partly gueſs: the ſolitude of the country, faintly checquered by the viſits of the apothecary, and the vicar's wife; his Lordſhip's fulſome fondneſs---his odious approaches---

Lady B. My dear Lady Plinlimmon, you are going on ſo rapidly! It is of no uſe to reckon the ſlight imperceptible threads of diſcontent, which grew at length into a cable. Behold me reſtored to independence, ſufficiently affluent, and almoſt as happy as a widow.

Lady Plin. May nothing interrupt the happineſs you poſſeſs, and which you deſerve! Before I had the honour of your acquaintance, I heard your merits highly extolled.

Lady B. I am exceedingly obliged to thoſe perſons who have ſmoothed my path to your Ladyſhip's partiality. But to whom am I indebted?

Lady Plin. The perſons I allude to are friends of your Ladyſhip, and are neighbours of our's in Wales; they were in town laſt winter: I mean Mrs. Vandal and her ſiſter.

Lady B. Yes! I recollect thoſe old tapeſtry figures. But you muſt not imagine there was any intimacy between us! I endured them at my toilet. They may be reckoned, if you pleaſe, among my morning friends, but you may be ſure I never acknowledged the creatures in an evening.

Lady Plin. That is charming! I ſhall acquire under

under your auſpices the faſhionable diſcriminations. The morning and evening friend is a happy diſtinction. But I fear I am treſpaſſing upon your time. (*Offering to go.*

Lady B. I will wait upon you immediately. With your permiſſion, I will ſend to the company to aſſemble in your book-room, where we will fix upon the plan of this evening's amuſement.

(*Exit Lady* PLINLIMMON.

SCENE.---*Book-Room.*

Enter Lord MELCOURT---*Mr.* PHRENSY.

Lord Mel. We will wait till Lady Plinlimmon comes, as ſhe wiſhes extremely to commence a literary acquaintance with you.

Mr. Phrenſy. She is comely, faith! I do not diſlike her perſon.

Lord Mel. She is the Ruben's ſtyle.

Mr. Phrenſy. I hear her coming.

Enter Lady PLINLIMMON.

Lady Plin. I hope, gentlemen, you have not been here long. I feel myſelf peculiarly diſtinguiſhed in the deſire I underſtand you expreſſed of forming an acquaintance with me. A man of your talents is not to be met with in every houſe.

(*Mr.* PHRENSY *bows very low.*

Lord Mel. That bow ſays more than a pompous train of words.

Lady Plin. I am not inſenſible to its eloquence; it flatters me as much as a dedication. Pray, ſir, are you engaged in any work at preſent?

Mr. Phrenſy. I am only ſuperintending a new edition

edition of the works of a dear friend, whom I have lately loſt---the immortal Claſſical Phrenſy!

Lord Mel. While Mr. Tombſtone is expatiating on the merits of his departed friend, I will call upon Sir Pepper, and return in a few minutes.

Lady Plin. Pray do! and bring Sir Pepper, and Iſabella along with you; the company is to rendezvous here. (*Exit Lord* MELCOURT.) Indeed, ſir, it is very amiable in you to ſuppreſs the effuſions of your own powers, to attend to the intereſt of another.

Mr. Phrenſy. It is not ſo much attending to the intereſt of my friend, as it is conſulting the intereſt of the nation, while I am preparing this noble edition of his works for the general delight.

Lady Plin. But I have been ſo unfortunate as never to hear of Phrenſy's name.

Mr. Phrenſy. What! never heard of Claſſical Phrenſy, Eſq.?

Lady Plin. No! I proteſt I never heard his name till you pronounced it.

Mr. Phrenſy. Let me tell you, Lady Plinlimmon, if the rays of his genius have not pierced the denſe atmoſphere of Wales, that inveſopes your mountains---

Lady Plin. Mr. Tombſtone, you alarm me! I had no idea of degrading your friend. I will promote the ſubſcription among all my acquaintance, and do every thing in my power to atone for my ſeeming diſreſpect.

Mr. Phrenſy. I am calm again: but you will excuſe a little warmth in favour of a perſon who is as dear to me as myſelf. We were inſeparable; we never differed upon the ſmalleſt point; if one ſpoke, the other liſtened; if one ſlept, the other nodded.

Lady Plin. Ah! ſuch a friendſhip is ſeldom to be found. I can aſſure you, ſir, the warmth that

juſt

juſt now broke from you has only ſerved to exalt me in your eſteem; and, as a proof of what I am ſaying, I beg I may lay the corner-ſtone of our acquaintance with this little brilliant.

(Gives him a ring.

Mr. Phrenſy. This generoſity ſubdues me.

Lady Plin. Let the ring be as a paſſport to this apartment at all times. And when you are at leiſure, I ſhould wiſh to take ſome leſſons of botany under your direction. Lord Melcourt informs me, that every ſcience is within the range of your mind.

Mr. Phrenſy. I ſhall be happy in obeying your commands.

Lady Plin. You think, ſir, that botany is a proper occupation for a female mind?

Mr. Phrenſy. Nothing ſo proper. Give me leave to cite a couplet, compoſed by my lamented friend, applicable to this ſubject. It is a happy couplet; he ſent it to Lady Nightſhade, who is well verſed in the loves of the plants; it runs thus:

> Delightful emblem of her ſofter power,
> A woman's proper ſtudy is a flower.

Lady Plin. Exquiſite couplet! What a great man your friend was!

Mr. Phrenſy. The confidence you place in me; this little twinkling monitor of your kindneſs; your affability; every thing prompts, inclines, urges, commands, compels me to undeceive you.

Lady Plin. To undeceive me? What can you mean, Mr. Tombſtone?

Mr. Phrenſy. I am not Mr. Tombſtone; it is an aſſumed name; a veil to cover me for certain purpoſes.

Lady Plin. What purpoſes? Who are you?

Mr. Phrenſy. Burſting from my concealment, like

like Æneas from his cloud, know that I am Claſſical Phrenſy! 'Tis Phrenſy ſpeaks! 'tis Phrenſy kneels! 'tis Phrenſy's lips now touch this hand!

Lady Plin. I did really imagine you was ſome great perſonage in diſguiſe. But explain the myſtery of all this.

Mr. Phrenſy. Envy, and her train have of late carried on ſo atrocious a war againſt me, that I have been perſuaded to ſham a retreat, and give out that I am dead.

Lady Plin. Excellent idea!

Mr. Phrenſy. In the mean time, I am collecting ſubſcriptions, and ſhall return triumphantly to life, under the cover of a ſuperb edition of all my works.

Lady Plin. I comprehend you perfectly, and am delighted with the confidence you repoſe in me.

Mr. Phrenſy. The family, Mr. Faſhion, the painter, who is my particular friend, are the only perſons in the world who are intruſted with this literary ſecret.

Lady Plin. I ſhall be as ſilent as Helicon.

Mr. Phrenſy. The Heliconian ſtream is apt to babble; it would be more accurate to ſay, as ſilent as Lethe.

Enter Sir PEPPER, *Miſs* PLINLIMMON, *Lord* MELCOURT, *and Mr.* FASHION.

Lady Plin. This is the gentleman, Sir Pepper, whom Lord Melcourt ſpeaks ſo highly of.

Sir P. Plin. I am Mr. Tombſtone's moſt obedient. My wife is fond of literature; you will find her verſed in ſome of the beſt authors. She is fond of converſing with the dead; or, to ſpeak more properly, with the living dead.

Mr.

Mr. Phrenſy. Her Ladyſhip was converſing with the living dead when you entered.

Lady Plin. And I muſt add, a favourite author.

Sir P. Plin. Is your Lordſhip determined to ſet out for Ireland as ſoon as the ceremony is over?

Lord Mel. The reaſon that compels me to leave you ſo ſoon is the buſineſs I have there, which demands immediate diſpatch.

Sir P. Plin. I am ſurpriſed Mr. Conſcience, the lawyer, is not yet come with the writings.

Lord Mel. He will certainly be here today.

Miſs Plin. What matters, whether or no the lawyer comes? I wiſh poor Taffey, we left on the road was arrived, for it is the parſon who ſpeaks the prologue to Love's play.

Mr. Faſh. Aptly obſerved! but the nuptial play, Miſs Plinlimmon, is ſometimes a tragi-comedy! the dialogue frequently uncouth, vehement, and boiſterous, What do you think your's will be?

Miſs Plin. Oh! our's will be a gay farce of three acts.

Enter Lady BELLAIR.

Lady B. Now we are all aſſembled, let the maſter of the ceremonies inſtruct us what we are to do.

Lord Mel. The carriages are at the door; ſuppoſe we take an airing through the park, and lounge at the different buildings.

Lady B. Let me be miſtreſs of the revels for this evening. We will imagine the phaetons are triumphal cars, and they ſhall convey us to the temple of Mars, where Mr. Tombſtone ſhall read to the company his new tranſlation of the Battle of the Frogs.

Lady

Lady Plin. Excellent! I love analogy.

Lady B. And as your Ladyſhip is fond of analogy, we will take ſome whipt ſyllabub in the pavilion of friendſhip, and regale ourſelves with ice-creams in the temple of Hymen.

Mr. Faſh. A little ſevere, I think.

Lord Mel. "Where more is meant then meets the ear." *(Offering his hand to Miſs* PLINLIMMON.

(Exeunt.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE---*The Temple of Hymen. The Company eating Ice-Creams.*

Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON, *Miſs* PLINLIMMON, *Lord* MELCOURT, *Mr.* FASHION *and Lady* BELLAIR.

Sir P. Plin. I think, my Lord, this Temple of Hymen, the moſt beautiful building in your park?

Mr. Faſh. This ice is excellent!

Miſs Plin. Cold food for the Temple of Hymen---

Mr. Faſh. 'Tis not the only food!

Miſs. Plin. You mean bread and cheeſe, and kiſſes.

Lord Mel. I beg, Lady Bellair, you will check your ciciſbeo, Mr. Faſhion, and not let him libertiniſe with my Diana.

Lady B. What pretence can I have to reſtrain him? Faſhion is like the air; a chartered libertine, free to play with every flower.

Miſs Plin. Egad he ſhan't play with me tho'!

Lady B. Tell me, my dear, why did your mamma leave us ſo abruptly?

Miſs

Miſs Plin. Mamma, I fancy has had enough of the Temple of Hymen.

Sir P. Plin. Your Ladyſhip perceives this ſpoiled child, has the liberty of ſaying what ſhe pleaſes. My wife is gone with her ingenious friend, to ſtudy botany.

Lady B. I ſhould be ſorry to conſtrain her Ladyſhip.

Sir P. Plin. Be ſo good as to inform me, who fancied theſe decorations? Are they indebted to the hand of any foreign artiſt?

Lord Mel. There is no occaſion to apply to foreign auxiliaries, for the purpoſes of elegant art---the native growth of our ſoil, amply ſupplies the demands of taſte in every department.

Sir P. Plin. This relievo, is happily executed! come here, Iſabella, you underſtand mythology. Here is hymen, attended by a group of cupids? Do you conceive the allegoric meaning of the artiſt?

Miſs Plin. Perfectly! Here is Hymen, with a torch in his hand, that is, I ſuppoſe to light the bride and bridegroom home. And the dear little cupids I ſuppoſe, foretell the children.

Sir P. Plin. Ridiculous! You pervert every thing by your diſtorted applications! But explain the remainder---you ſee night perſonated following Hymen, ſhe throws o'er her frame a mantle ſtudded with ſtars, and among the ſtars, appears a creſcent---

Miſs Plin. The mantle ſtudded with ſtars, deſignates the holy ſtillneſs and unruffled union of the marriage ſtate.

Sir P. Plin. Very well indeed.

Miſs Plin. And the creſcent denotes the honeymoon---

Sir P. Plin. There you relapſe into your abſurdity---

Mr. Faſh. Miſs Plinlimmon will perhaps do me the honor to explain this compartment---here is Hymen, binding a ſhepherd and a ſhepherdeſs with a chain of flowers.

Miſs Plin. It is your turn now, you ſhall explain this---

Mr. Faſh. Upon my word, I think this a moſt excellent allegory, and illuſtrates well the ſhort triumph of matrimony---the chain of roſes is eaſily broken, and the roſes ſoon fade.

Lord Mel. Faſhion ſpeaks the language of an inveterate batchelor, yet every thing in nature condemns his ſarcaſm: the birds, that make this grove re-echo with their harmony, what are all their ſongs, but ſo many hymns in honor of the married ſtate.

Mr. Faſh. I aſk your pardon, Lord Melcourt. The economy of your grove, will not aſſiſt your argument, in defence of Hymen, for every feathered couple who were ſo happy the laſt ſpring are now divorced, and all the harmony and love, which now reign in your woods is the reſult of ſeparation and of new engagements.

Lord Mel. Truce to your licentious inſinuations, to purify the temple that has been ſo profaned, I entreat Miſs Plinlimmon to favor us with the ſong in honor of Hymen, with which ſhe enchanted the company laſt night---

Miſs Plin. I am ready to comply with your requeſt.

Sir P. Plin. With your Ladyſhip's permiſſion, I will go and look for the botaniſts.

Lady B. He is poſitively jealous (*aſide.*)---Indeed Sir Pepper, you muſt not go, till you have heard the ſong.

Sir P. Plin. I am all obedience.

The SONG, by Miſs PLINLIMMON.

I.

Oh young affection's glowing train
By mutual fond endearment won!
At Hymen's altar claim the chain
That twines two willing hearts in one!

II.

Have ye not ſeen in Flora's bower,
Two roſes on one ſtem reſpire?
So form'd by paſſion's blending power,
Two hearts are thron'd on one deſire.

Sir P. Plin. I preſume, I have now your Ladyſhip's leave to wait upon the botaniſts.

Mr. Faſh. Sir Pepper, you will only interrupt the ſcholar, in the ſtudy of nature---the eminent profeſſor, under whom Lady Plinlimmon is now acquiring a new ſcience, would wiſh not to be deranged.

Sir P. Plin. Very likely---nevertheleſs, I ſhall make them a viſit.

Lady B. We will accompany you to the houſe.

(Exeunt omnes

SCENE

SCENE---*Book-Room.*

Lady PLINLIMMON *and Mr.* PHRENSY, *at a table covered with plants and flowers.*

Lady Plin. What a wonderful ſyſtem have you brought me acquainted with? I never could have conceived there were ſuch aſtoniſhing things in nature, as male and female flowers---

Mr. Phrenſy. I have moſt aſſuredly, let your Ladyſhip a little into Flora's ſecrets.

Lady Plin. Male and female flowers! I am petrified! But tell me, learned profeſſor, when the flowers are at a diſtance from one another, how they communicate their mutual paſſion?

Mr. Phrenſy. There nature interpoſes her happieſt ſtratagem! She calls her weſtern gales, her amorous zephyrs, and they on their fragrant wings convey the lovers to each other.

Lady Plin. Now, Sir, as you have led me, as it were, behind the curtain into Flora's green-room, I confeſs, I am not much edified at the morals of the plants? Indeed the flowers appear to be an abandoned profligate race---here is a honey ſuckle, which you ſay contains five males, and only one female---this modeſt ſnow-drop, you tell me, has ſix huſbands---

Mr. Phrenſy. Indeed, nature has been rather partial to your ſex in her economy of plants.

Lady Plin. Poor things! What a pity it is they are not endowed with ſenſibility!

Mr. Phrenſy. I have obſerved, ſince the ladies of faſhion have applied to the ſtudy of botany, they are not only ambitious of rivaling the flowers in beauty, but they have alſo endeavoured in ſome degree to rival them in their other prerogatives.

Lady Plin. Take care, Mr. Phrenſy; you are growing

growing cenſorious. (*Enter Sir* PEPPER PLINLIMMON.) You cannot imagine, Sir Pepper, how delighted I am with the beautiful and ſublime ſcience of botany!

Sir P. Plin. Indeed!

Lady Plin. This learned gentleman has raiſed, as it were, the veil of nature, and has revealed to me ſome of her ſecrets; and I muſt own, ſecrets that excite my aſtoniſhment. According to the illuſtrations of this learned profeſſor, the chalice of every flower is a kind of a houſe of bad fame.

Sir P. Plin. (ironically) Then a lady of your unſpotted virtue ought to ſhrink, as the ſenſitive-plant, from a ſtudy that preſents to you nothing but ſcenes of immorality.

Lady Plin. There can be no harm in gratifying a literary curioſity. But I aſſure you, Sir Pepper, I ſhall be apt to think it is not extremely decent to wear a noſegay!

Sir P. Plin. If you would read the delightful poem of the Loves of the Plants, you need not give this gentleman any further trouble. At preſent I muſt take the liberty of deſiring him to leave us alone, as I have ſomething to communicate to you in private.

Mr. Phrenſy. I obey your commands. In our next lecture we will expatiate on the dews that refreſh the flowers at night.

(*Exit Mr.* PHRENSY.

Lady Plin. Well, Sir Pepper, what have you to communicate? Nothing I preſume very entertaining?

Sir P. Plin. You now receive a poſitive order, not to admit that literary fop any more into your ſtudy:

Lady Plin. What, Sir Pepper! When the ray of knowlege begins to dawn, muſt it expire at your uncreating word?

Sir P. Plin. Your Ladyſhip's metaphorical expreſſions

preſſions have no effect upon me, and give me leave to obſerve, that I have always found you refractory and uncomplying with any requeſts.

Lady Plin. How can you be ſo unjuſt? Where is the wife throughout Wales that is more complacent? Did I ever refuſe to comply with a requeſt of yours, from January to January? Indeed, Sir Pepper, I might complain of the very few indulgences you ever granted me---

Sir P. Plin. Dare you complain of my want of indulgence, when there is not a whim, that I have not always been ready to indulge you in! When the gardening parſon from England came to us laſt year, did I not ſubmit to have the front of my old foreſt, cicatriſed into clumbs like large pies? Did he not fling a confining belt, as he called it, round my place! As if he thought the hills, vales and woods were going to run away! Did I not let him, to pleaſe you, zig zag the avenue in ſuch a manner, that I could hardly find the way to my own houſe?

Lady Plin. You muſt allow that Plinlimmon Caſtle, wanted a touch of the modern bard.

Sir P. Plin. Then I was obliged to endure his perpetual panegyric upon himſelf! How he was admitted to all the great tables in town? How he choſe a picture for this Lord---and a fan for that Lady---

Lady Plin. However, his viſit was not long, he ſtayed with us but a little month.

Sir P. Plin. If it had not been for the death of the french cook, he would have been at Plinlimmon Caſtle at this moment.

Lady Plin. Do you chooſe to put my patience to any further trial?

Sir P. Plin. Recall, if you pleaſe, the phyſician from the north, who came a practiſe-hunting into wales, did he not come twice a day to the caſtle

Caſtle to brace your nerves; was not this another indulgence? There you paſſed day after day, languiſhing on a ſopha! Then the room for ſooth was darkened. As you could endure only a kind of twilight, which you called *a jour doux*; then I was never to be admitted, becauſe I ſpoke ſo loud.

Lady B. The doctor ſaid you was too boiſterous, Sir Pepper, for the chamber of a valetudinarian, notwithſtanding your incredulity concerning the bad ſtate of my nerves, at that time, I can aſſure you, that it was to the ſopha, and to the doctor, that I owe---

Sir P. Plin. More than you will chooſe to allow.

Lady Plin. Don't be ſcurrilous, Sir Pepper.

Sir P. Plin. Then there was the fencible colonel, but I have done. Let me only entreat you not to complain any more of my not granting you any indulgences! Zounds, madam, the Pope at Rome could not have granted you more indulgences than I have. But no more, I have only to beg of you to ſtay here till I return with ſome papers for you to ſign, and which Lord Melcourt and Mr. Faſhion are to witneſs.

(*Exit Sir* PEPPER PLINLIMMON.

Lady Plin. Never was a perſon of delicate feelings ſo thrown away as I was when I conſented to be the wife of Sir Pepper.

Enter Mr. PHRENSY.

Mr. Phrenſy. I watched Sir Pepper out, I heard him go along the gallery muttering, as if he was much diſpleaſed, I am afraid he has been endeavouring to ruffle your angelic temper.

Lady Plin. He has abſolutely impoſed his commands upon me not to receive your viſits.

Mr. Phrenſy. I rejoice to hear it.

Lady Plin. What do you mean Mr. Phrenſy?

Mr. Phrenſy. Prohibition, like a glaſs of bitters, ſtimulates the appetite and awakens our partialities: I dare ſay, I now appear more amiable to your Ladyſhip than I did before.

Lady Plin. I confeſs, at leaſt, your preſumption does not offend me; but I am ſorry to inform you that you muſt not ſtay with me at preſent; Sir Pepper is returning immediately, and Lord Melcourt and Mr. Faſhion are coming with him.

Mr. Phrenſy. They cannot be here ſo ſoon---Mr Faſhion was juſt now in earneſt converſation with Lady Bellair in the long cathedral arbor, and Lord Melcourt was---

Lady Plin. You are miſtaken---for I hear them coming! What can be done! It is too late to eſcape---you muſt not take refuge in the bedchamber, my blabbing maid is there---conceal yourſelf behind this curtain.

(Lets down the curtain that hangs over the bookſhelves.

Mr. Phrenſy. (*Peeping from behind the curtain.*) I cannot at leaſt want entertainment where there are ſo many books.

Lady Plin. How can you be jocular now? You ſee the agitation I am in---

Enter Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON, *Lord* MELCOURT *and Mr.* FASHION.

Sir P. Plin. Theſe gentlemen will have the goodneſs to be witneſſes to your ſigning this paper.

Lord Mel. How does your Ladyſhip proceed in the ſtudy of botany.

Lady Plin. At the deſire of Sir Pepper, I have laid aſide the thoughts of botany, for the preſent.

Lord

Lord Mel. It is a pity your Ladyſhip ſhould not avail yourſelf of the advantage of being under the ſame roof with ſo eminent a profeſſor.

Mr. Faſh. A perſon of your Ladyſhip's abilities would have made a rapid progreſs under ſo ſkilful a director: he has a way of bringing his ſcholars forward in a very ſhort time.

Sir P. Plin. He has the way of bringing himſelf forward in a very ſhort time. Be ſo good as to ſign your name. (*Offering the paper.*) You keep theſe Gentlemen waiting.

Mr. Faſh. I am ſure we have nothing better to do than converſe with this learned Lady.

Lady Plin. You are very obliging; but I will not any longer intrude on your time.

(*She writes her name---Then Lord* MELCOURT *and Mr.* FASHION *ſign.*

Mr. Faſh. Pray, Lord Melcourt, have you a Virgil on thoſe ſhelves behind the curtain? Tombſtone and I had a diſpute about a paſſage in the fourth book.

Lord Mel. No! That is a mere lady's library, nothing but moderns---I ran up a few ſhelves, and furniſhed them with ſome every-day volumes for the convenience of any lady who might occupy theſe apartments.

Lady Plin. Mr. Faſhion, there may be a Virgil behind the curtain; but not the Virgil you mean.

Mr. Faſh. You allude to the tranſlation; no, that will not do; I want to conſult the original.

Lady Plin. Then you muſt have recourſe to the library below.

Lord Mel. But why does your Ladyſhip drop that curtain over the books?

Lady Plin. I found it hanging, and I make it a rule to leave things exactly as I find them.

Sir P. Plin. The curtain, my dear, I think was up juſt now, when I was with you.

Lady

Lady Plin. Was it, my dear? I do not recollect---very true, it was: The ſun played ſo powerfully upon the books, I was afraid it would tarniſh the beautiful bindings, ſo I dropt the curtain---

Mr. Faſh. I love beautiful bindings, and typographical luxury. Pray let me be favoured with the ſight of the books.

Lady Plin. Not worth your inſpection---a mere female library, and authors for women.

Lord Mel. Allow me to indulge Faſhion's curioſity. As for the ſun's ſpoiling the books, it matters not, when the bindings are the worſe for wear, the books may have new bindings; a well-bound book is not like a lady's reputation, which once ſoiled, can never--- *(Draws up the curtain---diſcovers Mr.* PHRENSY) There was, indeed, a Virgil behind the curtain!

Mr. Faſh. An author for a lady!

Lord Mel. But not ſo well bound as Faſhion expected.

Mr. Phrenſy. Gentlemen, you may laugh if you pleaſe, but we enterpriſing fellows are now and then expoſed to theſe untoward diſcoveries. They are inevitable incidents in the comedy of life. This is an incident---

Sir P. Plin. Arrogant pedant! If this was not Lord Melcourt's houſe, my cane would chaſtiſe your inſolence.

Lady Plin. I aſſure my dear, this gentleman had received my commands not to enter theſe apartments any more; at that inſtant I heard you returning.

Mr. Phrenſy. And to ſave you from an object ſo diſagreeable as myſelf, I ſecreted myſelf behind that curtain.

Sir P. Plin. Daring wretch! what is it you mean? Do you preſume to make the perſonal attractions

tractions of that lady the object of your bold pretenſions?

Lady Plin. Well, Sir Pepper, ſince we are among friends, I give you my word, that if ever I could be perſuaded to deviate from the path of decorum, and make a little *faux pas*, it ſhould not be with a literary perſon.

Mr. Faſh. Your Ladyſhip is perfectly right. The literary heroes are not renowned in the annals of gallantry; a bookworm is a poor harmleſs creature, without a ſting,

Sir P. Plin. What you ſay, Mr. Faſhion, is ſenſible and judicious. I have heard it obſerved, that a lieutenant of the guards is more formidable to a married man, than the whole body of the antiquarian ſociety. Mr. Tombſtone will excuſe the warmth I was juſt now ſurpriſed into.

Mr. Phrenſy. Pray do not mention it. Your prohibition with regard to my coming to this apartment ſhall be ſtrictly obeyed, and I ſhall for the future look for the honour of your Ladyſhip's ſociety only in the drawing-room, which you know is a neutral apartment, and acceſſible to every part of the family.

Sir P. Plin. Gentlemen, your obedient. I muſt return with theſe papers. *(Exit.*

Lord Mel. Well, this ſcene has ended much better than I expected. The ſtorm would have fallen heavy upon Tombſtone, had it not been for your Ladyſhip's happy ſarcaſm upon the gallantry of the learned.

Mr. Phrenſy. Your Lordſhip need not call me Tombſtone; her Ladyſhip knows my ſtory; there is nothing reſpecting myſelf that is a ſecret to her Ladyſhip.

Lord Mel. I am glad to hear it. But I muſt beg leave to abſent myſelf; I hope your Ladyſhip will excuſe me.

Lady

Lady Plin. But why will your Lordſhip deprive us of your company?

Lord Mel. Conſider, Madam, I am at the eve of being married---my mind is ſo full---I have ſo many things to think of.

Mr. Phrenſy. What can your Lordſhip have to think of? every thing flows ſo ſmoothly to your wiſhes---you have no more occaſion to think than a tranſlator.

Mr. Faſh. No more he has: and I could undertake to prove that his Lordſhip is a kind of a tranſlator himſelf, and even a tranſlator into various languages.

Lord Mel. How do you make that out?

Mr. Faſh. I have ſeen you ſometimes in liquor, and then you tranſlate yourſelf into a beaſt.

Mr. Phrenſy. Very good!

Mr. Faſh. You will ſoon be married, and then you will tranſlate yourſelf into another kind of animal.

Mr. Phrenſy. You miſtake, that will not be his own doing.

Mr. Faſh. Very true! ſome intimate friend will do that tranſlation for him.

Lord Mel. Will not your Ladyſhip take my part againſt theſe profane batchelors?

Lady Plin. The arrows theſe gentlemen ſhoot are not dipt in gall.

Lord Mel. Nor are their points very keen. But I muſt be going.

Lady Plin. As the party is breaking up, ſuppoſe, Mr. Phrenſy, you attend me to the neutral apartment. as you ingeniouſly term it.

Mr. Phrenſy. I am at your command.

(Offers his hand.---Exit with Lady PLINLIMMON.

Lord Mel. There go two, the moſt ridiculous perſonages!

Mr. Faſh. And the beſt ſuited to one another.

Lord

Lord Mel. I wiſh my future bride and I were half as well adapted to one another.

Mr. Faſh. What! Melcourt, do you feel faint-hearted?

Lord Mel. Faith! I do. The whimſicality of the different perſons under this roof, has occaſioned ſome laughing, which has ſerved to divert my attention from the main object. But when my thoughts reſt upon my approaching nuptials, my mind ſhrinks from its purpoſe.

Mr. Faſh. Oh! this is nothing but a vapour fit, a qualm before matrimony; it will paſs away.

Lord Mel. Never, never.

Mr. Faſh. She is handſome---very rich.

Lord Mel. Did ſhe poſſeſs all the barbaric gold of the city, it would not atone for her deficiencies in other reſpects.

Mr. Faſh. What do you call deficiencies? The little ruſticities of her homebred education will diſappear in time; ſhe will catch the tone of the ſtage ſhe is entering upon; the continual action of ſurrounding example in higher life will wear away her peculiarities, and ſhe will inſenſibly glide into the general maſs.

Lord Mel. You are calm and philoſophic; but I cannot be cooled and philoſophiſed into the approval of what I am ſenſible is not ſtrictly honourable; which is leading, and as it were betraying a young woman to the altar, for whom I entertain no paſſion, no preference, no eſteem.

Mr. Faſh. Your good nature will prompt you to treat her with civility; her ſimplicity will explain your politeneſs into love; and the torrent of amuſements in town will prevent her prying into your private pleaſure-ground.

Lord Mel. Faſhion, you talk it well; but I do proteſt, if I could be prevailed upon to marry this young woman, diſliking her as I do, I ſhould feel

an

an internal degradation, that would poiſon all my days.

Mr. Faſh. What can be done? it is too late to recede; the Welch Family will be in an uproar.

Lord Mel. I have a ſcheme---a lucky thought occurred this morning. I think I have hit upon a method of eſcaping from the chains I have been forging for myſelf; and in preparing the girl for the event, I ſhall contrive to ſoften her diſappointment by a kind of innocent impoſition, which will make her believe that the breaking off the intended marriage is her own act.

Mr. Faſh. This is at once generous and humane; to ward off the point that would wound her pardonable vanity in the expectation of being Lady Melcourt. But what is your plan?

Lord Mel. That I will communicate to you in a more private place; and if my ſtratagem ſhould not ſucceed, I muſt then have recourſe to your ſuperior invention. *(Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT

ACT IV.

Miſs Plin. (*Reading aloud*)---"Oh! happy ſtate, when ſouls each other draw". (*Enter Lord* MELCOURT.) Your calling upon me, when I am alone, is very kind; I am now convinced, your Lordſhip has a great regard for me.

Lord Mel. May I take the liberty of aſking, what book has the honor of engaging your attention?

Miſs Plin. I have been dreſſing my expectation with love verſes. (*Reads*)

"For thee the ſpouſe, prepares the bridal ring,
"For thee white virgins hymeneals ſing!"---

But what makes you look ſo grave, when you are ſo near being a bridegroom? A little bird ſung in my ear, that to-morrow, is to be the happy day, and I ſuppoſe your Lordſhip, is come to inform me of the happy tidings.

Lord Mel. No indeed! I did not come for that purpoſe, I came with another view.

Miſs Plin. I hope it will not rain to-morrow, there muſt not be a ſpeck of a cloud, in the ſkies, on our wedding day.

Lord Mel I muſt beg your ſerious attention, to

what I have to say to you (*Takes a chair; offers her one; they sit*)---If I seem a little embarrassed, you will have the goodness to excuse me? I think it my duty, to inform you, that when I was last abroad, I had the misfortune of being introduced to a young Nun who gained my affections, and though that accomplished woman is no more---

Miss Plin. If she is no more, I have nothing to apprehend, for with all her want of accomplishments, Isabella Plinlimmon, must be superior to a dead Nun.

Lord Mel. 'Tis not only that---

Miss Plin. Your Lordship did not fall in love with the whole convent?

Lord Mel. No, no, when I lost my Constantia, my warm affections, flew to her tomb.

Miss Plin. And when your warm affections have caught cold at her tomb, they will fly back again.

Lord Mel. Never, never, with her they have taken up their everlasting residence.

Miss Plin. Well let them; you and I will make new affections.

Lord Mel. (*Aside.*) Nothing will do, she is determined to have me.

Miss Plin. What does your Lordship say?

Lord Mel. I am afraid, Miss Plinlimmon, there are other objectionable circumstances relative to myself; with all the appearance of affability and condescension, I can assure you, that I am most vehemently passionate.

Miss Plin. Matrimony will cure that vice! I have heard my mamma say, that marriage is a great tamer.

Lord Mel. I have also the misfortune of walking in my sleep, and I get out of the window, and walk upon the roof of the house.

Miss Plin. As long as you do not insist upon my walking with you, I do not call that an objectionable circumstance: and when you are tired of

inhaling

imhaling the night breezes from the top of the houſe, you will find me overjoyed to receive you at your return.

Lord Mel. (*Riſing from his chair.*) I ſee, Miſs Plinlimmon, you make a jeſt of what my delicate feelings prompt me to reveal to you.

Miſs Plin. (*Riſing.*) Quite the reverſe; your candour endears you the more to me; and to return you an equivalent of candour and unreſerve, on my part, I will unfold to your Lordſhip a ſecret, though I am unwilling to diſcloſe it.

Lord Mel. Well, what have you to communicate?

Miſs Plin. 'Tis what you would have found out, if I did not reveal it: but in this charming moment of mutual confidence, I cannot reſiſt telling my love, that I have crooked legs;

Lord Mel. Crooked legs! The devil.

Miſs Plin. Do not let ſuch a trifle diſcompoſe you: my aunt, Lady Waddle, is made juſt the ſame as I am, and ſhe has eleven children.

Lord Mel. If you pleaſe, Miſs Plinlimmon, we will put an end to this diſcourſe.

Miſs Plin. If you deſire it. We ſhall have time enough to talk, when we are man and wife: adieu, I am going to Lady Bellair, and will tell her all that has paſſed, in this delightful, confidential intercourſe.

Lord Mel. I muſt inſiſt upon your not revealing one word, to Lady Bellair, of what I have been ſaying to you.

Miſs Plin. As you pleaſe; your Lordſhip will find me through life ſtrictly obſervant of your commands. (*Exit Miſs* PLINLIMMON.

Lord Mel. Were my debts and difficulties, treble to what they are, I would not extricate myſelf on the condition of marrying that thing! That vile antitheſis! Half a wit, and half an ideot. (*Enter Mr.* FASHION.) Oh! Faſhion, you never came

ſo

ſo opportunely, I am at a loſs how to act; my ſcheme has entirely failed---

Mr. Faſh. Then I muſt be your pilot to ſteer you through this intricate perplexity.

Lord Mel. Her ideot fondneſs, increaſes with what ſhould have excited her diſguſt.

Mr. Faſh. Leave me to conſtruct the means of withdrawing from you this girl's partiality, I preſume, I am empowered to ſay whatever I pleaſe.

Lord Mel. You may indulge the utmoſt latitude; paint me in whatever colours you chooſe;

Mr. Faſh. Well, I will endeavour to do my beſt for you; I have a good knack, you know, at a caricature.

Lord Mel. But do not make me too ridiculous.

Mr. Faſh. Remember, you juſt now gave me unlimited powers.

Lord Mel. Very true; I reſign myſelf to your judgment; let me appear abſurd, fickle, prepoſterous, any thing, to get rid of this matrimonial engagement.

Mr. Faſh. Suppoſe while I am unwinding her affections and deſires from you, I ſhould endeavour to bottom, and twiſt them round myſelf?

Lord Mel. What! you marry her? Are you in earneſt? Will you quit your free roving pleaſure-boat, for the monotonous hulk of matrimony?

Mr. Faſh. Her guineas will decorate and enliven the hulk.

Lord Mel. Well, if you can make a proſelyte of the girl, you have my full permiſſion, and beſt wiſhes; here is my licenſe, which with a change of a name will ſerve your purpoſe, and you may get married immediately, without acquainting any of the family of it.

Mr. Faſh. I will go, and inform Lady Bellair, of your reſolution, and of my project.

Lord Mel. I ſhould be delighted, if the girl was to take a fancy to you---

Mr. Faſh. We ſhall ſee. (*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE---*Lady* BELLAIR'S *Apartment.*

Lady BELLAIR---*Miſs* PLINLIMMON.

Lady B. What you chooſe to ſay in private, is of no conſequence; but before company, I muſt inſiſt upon your never mentioning my huſband.

Miſs Plin. Then tell me, as we are alone; I long to hear what occaſioned the ſeparation between Lord Bellair and you.

Lady B. Reſtrain this idle curioſity; it does not become---

Miſs Plin. Did your huſband walk in his ſleep? Was he in love with a dead nun?

Lady B. How wildly you talk!

Miſs Plin. Not ſo wildly neither; I know what I know; but I will not tell.

Enter Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON.

Sir P. Plin. I take the liberty of calling upon your Ladyſhip to expreſs my uneaſineſs that the lawyer from town is not yet arrived, the poſt is come in, and I have no information about him.

Lady B. Delay is the characteriſtic of his order! When that Gray's Inn ſlug has crawled over, and covered with his black ſlime an acre of parchment, we ſhall ſee him here.

Miſs Plin. But Mr. Taffey, who is to perform the ceremony, is as neceſſary as the lawyer.

Sir P. Plin. As for Mr. Taffey, I have a letter from him; he will be here this evening.

Miſs Plin. Then all is well! *(Rejoicing extravagantly.---Enter Lord* MELCOURT) My Lord! my

my Lord! Taffey will be here this evening, and to-morrow I ſhall be the fondeſt of wives!

Lord Mel. Flattering as your expectancy may be to me, I wiſh you would reſtrain this inordinate exultation.

Miſs. Plin. Well, papa, I will go and pack up my fine cloaths, for I ſuppoſe we ſhall ſet out for Ireland immediately after the ceremony. I rejoice to think that Taffey will be here this evening! *(Exit.*

Lord Mel. (Aſide to Lady BELLAIR) Was there ever ſuch a Hottentot?

Sir P. Plin. You don't appear, Lord Melcourt, to be ſtruck with the artleſs manner of my girl.

Lord Mel. I aſk your pardon, I am exceedingly ſtruck!

Sir P. Plin. She has a few ruſticities adhering to her, all which will drop from her, like droſs from gold.

Lord Mel. In the crucible of Lady Bellair's refining converſation.

Sir P. Plin. Very true. I am certain Lady Bellair would perform miracles on my daughter---if ſhe pleaſed.

Lady B. But why, Sir Pepper, do you doubt my inclination?

Sir P. Plin. Becauſe you, fine ladies, diſlike trouble. I will be bold to ſay, that in the courſe of the winter, you never do any thing your inclination, that is to ſay, your vanity does not prompt you to do.

Lady B. I aſk your pardon, Sir Pepper.

Sir P. Plin. Indulge for once an old man's curioſity, and edify me by recording ſome inſtances where you act in oppoſition to the dictates of your inclination.

Lord Mel. This is a perfect challenge.

Lady B. Well, let me recollect. I go every other Sunday, in the early part of the evening to an

an old aunt, who lives at the Antipodes of the fashionable part of the town, and there I retail to her the historic scandal of the fortnight; and then she reads to me through her green spectacles, out of a folio, a sermon of the last century.

Lord Mel. I hope, Sir Pepper, you will give Lady Bellair some credit for that.

Lady B. Then I go once in the winter to the Ancient Music.

Sir P. Plin. That, I suppose, is a concert performed by the decayed musicians.

Lady B. Not exactly so; it is, however, a very edifying concert, and composed of those hoary, venerable notes, that in days of yore delighted the ears of Harry the eighth and Anne Bullen, and is now a very suitable recreation for old batchelors, old maids, and emigrant nuns! But to continue the narrative of my mortified inclination: my carriage every morning makes one of the long procession of coaches that besiege the circulating library in Bond Street.

Sir P. Plin. That denotes your Ladyship's fondness for literature.

Lady B. I beg your pardon, Sir Pepper, literature is my aversion; I never look into a book, but I cannot avoid calling every morning at the library; it is a kind of literary tavern, where the waiters are in perpetual demand. A dish of elegant sonnets for Miss Simper; satires with a poignant sauce for Mrs. Grumble; a sirloin of history for Lady Sleepless; a broil'd devil of private anecdote, highly peppered with scandal, for Lady Angelica Worthless. It would amuse you, Sir Pepper, to see these female academics enter the porch of Hookham College, their cheeks, paled by study, a little relieved by a thin stratum of morning rouge. Then you would wonder at the method the learned professors adopt of supplying the impatience of their pupils: for example---one lady receives

receives the firſt volume of an author, of which ſhe will never enquire for the ſecond; at the ſame time ſhe receives the ſecond volume of another author, of which ſhe has not yet an idea of the firſt.

Sir P. Plin. Give me leave to obſerve, this vague method of reading muſt create a kind of chaos, without conſiſtency.

Lady B. Conſiſtency is a vulgar word, we do not admit into our vocabulary; and as for the chaos you diſapprove of, I really think there is to be found the whole merit; for this miſcellaneous, variegated, unconnected reading, forms the beautiful dove-tailed, moſaic literature of the female mind.

Sir P. Plin. I hope you will allow Lady Plinlimmon to be a brilliant exception to your general deſcription.

Lady B. Moſt undoubtedly; I have a long liſt of exceptions. But not to interrupt the narrative of my own memoirs---I am ſometimes obliged to mingle with the elegant mob at a ſale of pictures.

Sir P. Plin. A ſale of pictures muſt be very improving. You there frequently meet with the works of the old maſters.

Lady B. The ladies of faſhion do not go to auctions for the ſake of the *old* maſters; do they, Lord Melcourt?

Lord Mel. No, indeed! A bow from Lord Gauze, a ſmile from Lord Flimſy, or a compliment from Sir Goſſamer Bagatelle, effaces the names of Rembrant, Corregio, and Vandyke!

Lady B. However, we play with the catalogue, and we ſtare at the pictures. And I have heard it obſerved, that in the two late celebrated ſales, the love of Vertú made the ladies gaze at ſome pictures, from which their grand-mammas would have turned away.

Sir P. Plin. Indeed!

Lady

Lady B. But then, I will ſay for the ladies, that they ſtole a glance at theſe pictures, through the medium of their long veils, which you know tranſmits a kind of drapery, to the paintings! But to proceed, I am under the obligation, ſometimes, of getting up in the middle of the night, to be in readineſs, to go to a new play, and with all my precaution, I never can get there before the middle of the ſecond act.

Sir P. Plin. That is very unlucky.

Lady B. Not in the leaſt; for I never liſten to the play.

Sir P. Plin. But does not your talking loud in the firſt row, diſturb the audience?

Lady B. I never occupy the firſt row; I place the old ladies, in the firſt and ſecond row, they have nothing to do, (poor things) but to liſten to the play? And then I ſit ſnug on the laſt form, which we call among ourſelves, tattle row, and then perhaps, I am ſeated between Sir Voluble Prattle, and Colonel Eaſy, and we three converſe and titter *a la ſourdine*, the whole evening: but I am afraid I grow dull.

Sir P. Plin. Quite the reverſe, I aſſure you; I preſume, your Ladyſhip pays more attention to the opera; the ſoftneſs of the Italian language, has ſomething enchanting to a delicate ear.

Lady B. I know nothing of the Italian language, there is no attaining the knowledge of it, without paſſing through the perplexing, jumbling, croſs-roads of a grammar; that would ſhake my intellects to pieces.

Sir P. Plin. Still the muſic may flatter the ear, though you do not comprehend the words.

Lady B. I comprehend the muſic as little as I do the words.

Sir P. Plin. It is, then, the dancing I conclude delights you---

Lady B. No; the dancing does not particularly intereſt me; indeed I cannot ſee the dancing in my box, for I generally ſit with my back to the ſtage.

Sir P. Plin. As neither the muſic, nor the dancing has any allurement, I ſuppoſe your Ladyſhip ſeldom or never goes to the opera.

Lady B. I aſk your pardon, Sir Pepper, I never omit an opera.

Sir P. Plin. What then can be the attraction? I really ſee nothing to entice you.

Lady B. Is it nothing, Sir Pepper, to lean half out of one's box; with the head inclined to give the eaſy feather a more graceful play? which looks a meteor, waving in the air; and which, as the poet ſays,

" Allures attention, from the tuneful ſcene;
" Gives fops the flutter, and old maids the ſpleen."

Is it nothing, Sir Pepper, to have all the opera glaſſes levelled at one? To ſit in my box, as on a throne, the unrivalled queen of Fopland?

Lord Mel. I muſt confeſs, Lady Bellair, you have an extenſive dominion; Fopland is a very populous country.

Lady B. So it is, and what is ſtill better, there is not an old man to be found in it.

Sir P. Plin. I am ſorry, I am excluded from being one of your majeſty's ſubjects?

Lady B. Out of regard to your gallantry, I will introduce a bill to naturaliſe you, Sir Pepper, but not to loſe the thread of my narrative, I muſt inform you, that I go once in the winter to an aſſembly, given by the wife of my phyſician; there all his pale convaleſcents ſtalk about like ghoſts:

Lord Mel. And to conclude the deſcription; the lemonade is intentionally made ſo acid that the doctor is obliged to return all the viſits of his company the next day.

Sir

Sir P. Plin. Very good indeed.

Lady B. You perceive what a mortified life I am obliged to lead.

Sir P. Plin. If your hiſtoric pencil has drawn a true reſemblance, I muſt confeſs, a faſhionable lady is to me an incomprehenſible being. (*Exit.*

Lady B. Now we have got rid of the ridiculous baronet, I muſt aſſume a graver tone; you know, I can be very ſerious when occaſion demands. The more I ſee of Sir Pepper's abſurd daughter, the more I am ſenſibly affected at the thought of your approaching nuptials. The long train of peculiar diſtreſſes incident to our family, I wiſh not to ſee terminated by means ſo unworthy and ignominous.

Lord Mel. I do not comprehend you.

Lady B. By marrying a young woman you are aſhamed of; our family has been long involved in various difficulties; it has been known to misfortune, but it has never been acquainted with diſhonor? Imagine two large portals opening before you, through one of which, you ſhould be obliged to paſs! Imagine one preſenting to your view a brilliant perſpective, a ſun ſtreaming from a ſummer ſky, and illuminating an earthly paradiſe! The other unfolding to your viſion, a lowring atmoſphere hanging over a blaſted heath. Picture to yourſelf theſe words, engraved on the firſt portal; *they who paſs through me, muſt caſt away honor.*---Fancy on the other, you behold this inſcription---*This road leads, to honorable poverty*; through which of theſe arches, would you direct your footſteps? Oh! my dear brother, in the agitation you betray, I read your heroic anſwer.

Lord Mel. Before you had communicated your ſentiments to me, upon this ſubject, I had made my reflection, and had reſolved, but Mr. Faſhion, whom I am glad to ſee, (*Enter* FASHION.) will beſt

beſt unfold the plan we had formed together, I refer you to him, the confuſion I am at preſent under, will excuſe my leaving you ſo abruptly.

(*Exit.*

Mr. Faſh. Heyday, what is the matter with Melcourt? He ſtalked by me, in dumb ſhew, like a tragedy hero.

Lady B. The agitation you perceive he is in, is the honeſt working of nature, it will do him no harm; my brother tells me, you have ſomething to communicate to me.

Mr. Faſh. I have, and it is of importance, I was commiſſioned by him, as he did not chooſe to ſpeak himſelf, that he is determined to break off this match.

Lady B. He partly intimated his reſolution. But who undertakes to inform the girl of his reſolution?

Mr. Faſh. That falls to my part in the play.

Lady B. What do you propoſe ſaying to the poor girl? How will you open your unpleaſant embaſſy?

Mr. Faſh. Not ſo unpleaſant, becauſe I intend to propoſe myſelf.

Lady B. Propoſe yourſelf!

Mr. Faſh. As I do not occupy ſo high a ſtation in life as Lord Melcourt, I mean, by propoſing myſelf, to be a kind of a parachute, and ſo break, as it were, her fall.

Lady B. You are very kind, indeed. You may not perhaps be ſo invincible in the eyes of the young lady as you are in your own.

Mr. Faſh. I rely on your friendly aſſiſtance.

Lady B. There you are miſtaken. But do not impute my declining to co-operate with you, to a fear that this may be the means of withdrawing your aſſiduities and attentions from me. I hope I act from a more noble impulſe. I am ready to confeſs that the excluſive preference and predilection

tion you have ſhewn me of late, have gratified my vanity; but like the waves that beat againſt the heedleſs rock, they have not ſhook my conſtancy to the man whoſe name I bear.

Mr. Faſh. The playful gaiety of your diſpoſition led me aſtray, and I thought you was delighted to return to ſociety unaccompanied by Lord Bellair.

Lady B. I own I have the appearance of airineſs and levity; but my gaiety is frequently aſſumed, and I have recourſe to diſſipation more as a medicine than a feaſt.

Mr. Faſh. As you are ſo kind as to ſpeak to me in ſo unreſerved a manner, I think it incumbent on me to declare that I have no inbred averſion to the girl. I am not ſo faſtidious, ſo difficult, as Melcourt; and I will add, that was I to ſucceed, I would do every thing in my power to contribute to her happineſs, and give me alſo leave to ſay that I believe I am not indifferent to her.

Lady B. With ſuch honorable ſentiments as you now aſſure me you entertain, you have my permiſſion to make the trial. Mutual propenſity, believe me, is the beſt ſecurity for happineſs. The ſmiling flowers ſhe ſcatters from her hand can alone enliven the domeſtic walk! 'Tis ſhe who diſplays to the bride and bridegroom that eternal ſpring which all lovers talk of, but which ſo few experience! 'Tis ſhe who gilds and diſſipates the clouds of care, and pours upon the ſoul the chearful ſunſhine of the mind. *(Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

ACT V.

Miſs PLINLIMMON, *ſitting at a Table, writing.*

I AM glad to find that my letters are finiſhed. I cannot conceive what Mr. Faſhion has to ſay to me in private. Theſe letters will make my friends very happy. (*Enter Mr.* FASHION) You are punctual to your time; I was juſt thinking of you. Mr. Faſhion, you are a perſonable man---I wonder you are not married.

Mr. Faſh. The reaſon I am not married, is becauſe there is only one Miſs Plinlimmon. But give me leave to tell you, that you are too late for the poſt.

Miſs Plin. Theſe letters are not intended for to-day's poſt, nor to morrow's poſt; but they are intended for the poſt the day after the wedding. You muſt know that I am bound by a ſolemn promiſe to write two letters the day after my marriage, and as we ſhall be on our road to Ireland on that day, and conſequently ſhall have no time to write, I thought it would be a good plan to write beforehand, and date the letters after the wedding, which

which you ſee I have done, and have ſigned myſelf Iſabella Melcourt.

Mr. Faſh. Very ingeniouſly contrived indeed! May I take the liberty of aſking who this letter is to?

Miſs Plin. It is to Mrs. Evans, an old maiden aunt, who was always very kind to me. There are no ſecrets, if you pleaſe, I will read it to you.

Mr. Faſh. I am ſure it muſt be worth hearing if it comes from your pen.

Miſs Plin. (reads)

" Dear Aunt,

" Yeſterday the holy ceremony was per-
" formed. We all wept---Mamma had an hyſ-
" teric---two beautiful tears ſtole down the cheek
" of my amiable Lord, and when he put on the
" ring his hand trembled"---

Mr. Faſh. But, Miſs Plinlimmon, allow me to aſk, how do you know all this will happen?

Miſs Plin. There is always weeping at a wedding, as much as at a funeral.

Mr. Faſh. Well, I plead ignorance, for I never aſſiſted at a wedding.

Miſs Plin. Then get your white handkerchief ready to-morrow morning. But let me ſee where I left off--- *(reads)*

" ---When he put on the ring his hand trem-
" bled. After the ceremony, we ſat down to a
" ſumptuous collation. We lay at a town whoſe
" name I forget. You cannot, dear madam, have
" any conception of his Lordſhip's kindneſs to
" me.

" I am, dear Aunt,

" Your thrice happy niece,

" Isabella Melcourt.

" *Poſtcript.* I ſhould have written a longer let-
" ter, had I not a bad head-ache."

Mr.

Mr. Faſh. But permit me to aſk, how do you foreſee you will have a bad head-ache?

Miſs Plin. I heard my mamma-in-law ſay that ſhe had a terrible head-ache, the day after ſhe married, ſo 'tis very probable---

Mr. Faſh. I perceive there is another letter; who is honored with this mark of your remembrance?

Miſs Plin. This is to Miſs Bluehoſe, member of the female literary ſociety at Carnarvon.

Mr. Faſh. With this lady I ſuppoſe you aſſume a higher ſtyle.

Miſs Plin. I endeavour in this letter to write exactly as Miſs Bluehoſe talks--- (*Reads.*)

" Sweet Academic Friend,

" Aurora, yeſterday, put on her beſt ſaf-
" fron robe, to aſſiſt at our wedding: we are on
" our road to Ireland, my lord, you know, is a na-
" tive of that kingdom, what a delightful country
" muſt that be, which produces ſuch men? Laſt
" night three minutes before twelve, I aſcended
" the expecting couch.

Mr. Faſh. Very happy expreſſion that!

Miſs Plin. I am glad you are pleaſed with it, the expecting couch, is in the manner and ſtyle of our academic ſociety; but to proceed: (*reads*) " Hiſtory informs us, my dear Miſs Bluehoſe, of the " bed of Procuſtes, of the bed of Ware, of the *Lit* " *de Juſtice*, and of the bed of honor; I wonder that " in this learned catalogue, the hiſtorian omitted " the bed of Hymen."

Mr. Faſh. It is an unpardonable omiſſion, indeed.

Miſs. Plin. Now we have done with the letters, be ſo good as to inform me why you look ſo ſerious? I begin to think, you envy Lord Melcourt---well, if you do, I will tell you, for your comfort, that if I was to be a widow, and had moulted

moulted away my black feathers, that is to ſay, when I had ſhed my weeds and got rid of my ſorrow, I really think you would ſtand a good chance.

Mr. Faſh. You flatter me extremely, but to advert to the ſubject, which induced me to beg this private audience, I muſt inform you that nothing but the great reſpect I entertain for you, could compel me to mention Lord Melcourt, in terms not the moſt favourable.

Miſs Plin. I know what you allude to, but he has promiſed papa, never to touch a card again.

Mr. Faſh. I do not allude to his paſſion for gaming, I point to quite a different thing.

Miſs Plin. I know what you mean there too, he has told me all; he clambers up the roof of the houſe every night.

Mr. Faſh. Clambers up the roof of the houſe! I can't tell what he has choſen to communicate to you, but I dare ſay, he has not given you any hint of what my regard for you prompts me to reveal; to keep you no longer in ſuſpenſe, Melcourt does not love you; I can ſcarcely ſuppreſs my indignation, when I behold ſo enchanting, ſo learned, ſo witty a young lady as Miſs Plinlimmon become---

Miſs Plin. How kind you are!

Mr. Faſh. Become, I ſay, the dupe of that indigent peer, who only wiſhes to have his debts paid by your fortune. He will look upon you with no greater ſenſibility than he does his old banker in the city: he will ſet you aſide, like an uſeleſs piece of lumber.

Miſs Plin. You petrify me, Mr. Faſhion! But I have a reſource left, which will prevent my being reduced to an uſeleſs piece of lumber.

Mr. Faſh. And what is that reſource?

Miſs. Plin. It is a reſource which belongs to the rights of women; a curtain lecture.

Mr. Faſh. Oh! that will have no effect.

Miſs Plin. I know that my mamma-in-law has frequent recourſe to that expedient.

Mr. Faſh. And what has been her ſucceſs? Her nocturnal murmurings, and her loud matin ſong, what have they produced, but an airy, talkative family of bickerings and diſcontent?

Miſs Plin. 'Tis very true.

Mr. Faſh. I have frequently been aſtoniſhed at Lord Melcourt's cold indifference towards you.

Miſs Plin. Indeed he has not ſaid one kind word to me ſince I have been at Melcourt Hall.

Mr. Faſh. Then the vehemence of his character---

Miſs Plin. He told me himſelf he was as croſs as the devil.

Mr. Faſh. Then I have wondered at the contempt with which he preſumes to ſpeak of you.

Miſs Plin. I dare ſay he laughs at me behind my back.

Mr. Faſh. I have heard him ſay you are an ideot.

Miſs Plin. I an ideot! Did he dare call me an ideot? I, who am one of the female academics at Carnarvon! I an ideot, with whom Miſs Bluehoſe correſponds? I an ideot, who have been electrified, and magnetiſed! I an ideot, who am acquainted with Mr. Omega, the famous Jew botaniſt, and have feaſted as his houſe upon his Hebrew roots?

Mr. Faſh. Notwithſtanding all theſe credentials of your wit, you find what he ſays of you.

Miſs Plin. I feel the blood of the Plinlimmons riſe within me.

Mr. Faſh. I ſhould not be ſurpriſed, if under the idea of your being an ideot, he ſhould confine you

you in ſome old caſtle in Ireland, without allowing you pen, ink or paper, to write to your friend, Miſs Bluehoſe; without having the pleaſure of being magnetiſed; and without ever having the gratification of dining upon Hebrew roots.

Miſs Plin. I renounce him from this moment! With this breath *(blows through her fingers)* I blow away all my love! Imagine you ſee it floating through the air, never to return to Lord Melcourt again!

Mr. Faſh. Methinks I behold the fairy chariot bearing away your affections! Oh! that I could arreſt the richly freighted vehicle, and ſeize the invaluable prize.

Miſs Plin. Indeed? Are you in earneſt?

Mr. Faſh. I am, upon my honour!

Miſs Plin. Ah! but you are ſo wild, and you love all the women!

Mr. Faſh. I am like other young men, when under no particular engagement; like a bird in the grove, I wing from bough to bough; but once married, I ſhould be as domeſtic and as conſtant as the turtle-dove.

Miſs Plin. If it be ſo, I could be almoſt induced---

Mr. Faſh. Come, come, let me ſeize this coy hand---ſhew you have a ſpirit to reward as well as to reſent.

Miſs Plin. (laughing) It would be a good trick to play the Iriſh peer.

Mr. Faſh. The ſtudy of my life would be your happineſs.

Miſs Plin. Are you a gentleman?

Mr. Faſh. That you know by my name---and in point of character, I am totally different from Lord Melcourt---I love you paſſionately.

Miſs Plin. That is no unpleaſing intelligence.

Mr. Faſh. I do not walk in my ſleep.

Miſs Plin. I am very glad to hear that.

Mr.

Mr. Faſh. But no time is to be loſt---this licenſe of Lord Melcourt's, with a ſmall change, will ſerve our purpoſe.

Miſs Plin. Taffey will ſow us together in a twinkle.

Mr. Faſh. Let us fly to the parſon.

(Exeunt.

SCENE---*Another Apartment.*

Enter Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON.

Well, if what I am informed of ſhould prove true, that my girl has no inclination to Lord Melcourt, I ſhall not force her.

Lady Plin. (behind the ſcenes) Where is Sir Pepper? Where is Sir Pepper?

Sir P. Plin. I hear Lady Plinlimmon's voice---now ſhe is coming to pour upon me, as from a wide mortar-piece.

Enter Lady PLINLIMMON.

Lady Plin. Do you call me a wide mortar-piece, Sir Pepper?---But let that paſs---I come to demand your authority over this wayward girl of our's, who pretends to diſlike Lord Melcourt, becauſe he is not, forſooth, ſentimentally in love with her.

Sir P. Plin. Without mutual affection, there is no living together.

Lady Plin. Have we not lived theſe fifteen years together.

Sir P. Plin. Yes! and how have we lived?

(Enter

Enter Lady BELLAIR.

Lady Plin. I have been gently expoſtulating with Sir Pepper, on his concurring with Iſabella's whimſical objection to Lord Melcourt.

Lady B. I confeſs I ſide with Sir Pepper.

Lady Plin. Is it poſſible!

Lady B. Though the loſs is my brother's, I ſhall not offer a word to reconcile Sir Pepper to an engagement that does not meet with his daughter's approbation.

Lady Plin. I am aſtoniſhed to hear Lady Bellair encourage a ruſtic notion that is unknown to the regions of faſhion.

Lady B. Your Ladyſhip muſt allow that mutual happineſs is the end propoſed. 'Tis the mark, which if the bride and bridegroom in the higher ſphere do not hit, it is becauſe they take a falſe aim.

Lady Plin. Morality, too!

Lady B. Am not I an inſtance of the folly of hurrying into an unavoidable engagement?

Lady Plin. Not in the leaſt. Does not the world encircle you with all its attractions? Do you not enjoy the advantages of wedlock, without the incumbrances?---your Lord's title, and a handſome allowance?

Lady B. Your Ladyſhip forgets that Sir Pepper is preſent.

Sir P. Plin. I beg ſhe may not be interrupted on my account.

Lady Plin. Give me leave to aſk in what manner your Ladyſhip can be ſuppoſed to be a ſufferer from your being ſeparated from Lord Bellair? Do your jewels ſhine leſs bright? Is the oſtrich-feather on your cap leſs playful? Is the lace---

Sir P. Plin. Zounds! Lady Plinlimmon, your head

head is like a newſpaper after a birth-day---full of nothing but gauzes, foils, and trimmings!

Lady Plin. Well, I ſtand corrected. I give up the point concerning my daughter, ſince I find every body is againſt me.

Enter Lord MELCOURT.

Lord Mel. I am happy to find Lady Plinlimmon here; I am impatient to make this open declaration to her, that the concern I feel in not being allowed to expect the honour of her alliance, is loſt in the higher conſideration of Miſs Plinlimmon's happineſs.

Lady Plin. Indeed, my Lord, you are too good, to give way to the abſurd objections of an ignorant girl.

Enter Mr. FASHION, *and Miſs* PLINLIMMON, *Mr.* PHRENSY, *and Mr.* FANCY.

Mr. FASHION *and Miſs* PLINLIMMON, *kneel.*

Miſs Plin. Dear papa, give me and my huſband your bleſſing.

Sir P. Plin. Your huſband?

Lady Plin. Your huſband?

Mr. Phrenſy. 'Tis even ſo. I had the honour of giving her away.

Lady Plin. What do you ſay to this, Lord Melcourt? (*To Mr.* FASHION) Audacious wretch, to ſteal my daughter.

Lord Mel. I can aſſure your Ladyſhip, Faſhion is one of the moſt ancient families in the kingdom, and has a title in obeyance.

Lady Plin. Well, if he has a title in obeyance.

Sir

Sir P. Plin. But will Lord Melcourt vouch for his character?

Lord Mel. Her Ladyſhip looks to the gaudy diſtinction of title; you, ſir, look for ſomething more ſubſtantial! Then let me tell you that Faſhion poſſeſſes thoſe titles which virtue's patent only can beſtow, honor and integrity.

Sir P. Plin. Then I am ſatisfied, come Lady Plinlimmon, let us forgive our child, (*Going up to Mr.* FASHION *and Lady* PLINLIMMON.

Mr. Phrenſy. But who is to reward me for my epithalamium? To whom ſhall I conſign it?

Lord Mel. I will tell you---conſign it to the fire-grate, that is the only way to inſure it a warm reception.

Mr. Phrenſy. Your envy at my talents prompts you to uſe ſo pitiful a conceit.

Lord Mel. Well, Phrenſy, I will indulge another conceit which will not offend you ſo much, and that is; I hope as long as you chooſe to be dead, you will live at Melcourt Hall.

Mr. Phrenſy. Egad, Melcourt Hall is ſo delightful a ſepulchre, I do not believe I ſhall ever wiſh to be alive again.

Lord Mel. Do you, then, never intend to return to life.

Mr. Phrenſy. Yes, I do, as ſoon as I have, by means of my ſubſcription) completed my poetical loan; my return to life will be a kind of an ovation: the triumphal proceſſion ſhall begin with my odes, each on his fiery Pegaſus; my ſatires, like tomahawks, ſhall next appear; then my elegies ſhall move like a weeping train of female captives, to theſe ſhall ſucceed my epigrams, a briſk troop of archers, with their pointed darts; my grand epic like a large unwieldy elephant, ſhall march by itſelf: then my tragedies, attired as widows, ſhall walk on one ſide, while my gaily veſted comedies ſhall trip on the other.

Mr.

Mr. Fancy. And a muſical band of catcalls ſhall walk between.

Mr. Phrenſy. Baſe canvaſs dauber! how dare you interrupt me? when the poet's eye was in a fine Phrenſy rolling, when the muſe was kindling with conception! vile bruſh-holder; you do not know the miſchief you have done; you have made the muſe miſcarry; the bright viſion is loſt for ever--- (*Exit Mr.* PHRENSY.

Lady B. (*Advancing*) Now Phrenſy has finiſhed his poetical rhapſody, I beg I may preſent my congratulations to the bride and bridegroom; I muſt confeſs to you, Mr. Faſhion, that I little thought the gay irregular comedy of your bachelor life would have terminated with ſo abrupt and moral a concluſion; as for you, my dear, though I am not to call you ſiſter, you will always be the object of my tender ſolicitude.

Miſs. Plin. I am a giddy creature, but I hope I ſhall never forfeit your protection, I ſhall leave to others to purſue the varying modes and fopperies of the day; this is the Faſhion (*pointing to Faſhion*) that I ſhall adopt, and to this Faſhion I ſhall be ever conſtant.

Lord Mel. Bravo! Matrimony inſpires you, well as it is now, my turn to ſpeak, I beg you will both accept of my beſt wiſhes; may happineſs lead you through life, along her moſt ſmooth and flowry path.

Miſs Plin. Well, my lord, ſince you take my tricking you in ſuch perfect good humour, when I am miſtreſs of my fortune, I will lend you whatever money you ſtand in need of.

Mr. Faſh. (*diſpleaſed*) Lord Melcourt does not want our money, I preſume.

Miſs. Plin. I hope to ſee your Lordſhip at our houſe in the country; I ſuppoſe, Mr. Faſhion, you have one ſomewhere.

Lord

Lord Mel. Faſhion's country houſe, I am afraid, is little better than a caſtle in the air, but till he has one erected upon a more ſolid foundation, I entreat Mr. and Mrs. Faſhion will look upon Melcourt Hall as their own.

Miſs Plin. Egad this is handſome: I have one thing more to recommend to your Lordſhip.

Lord Mel. What are your commands?

Miſs Plin. (*half aſide*) Be ſure you never mention the crooked legs.

Lord Mel. Depend upon my diſcretion---come, let us all paſs ſome chearful days under this roof; let reproaches and complainings ceaſe, let good humour, ſocial intercourſe, pleaſantry and content ſucceed.

END OF THE COMEDY.

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE

BY THE RIGHT HON. FIELD MARSHAL CONWAY.

Spoken by Miſs Farren.

WITH gloomy bodings for his bantling play,
Our Author came to me the other day,
A boon to aſk, tho' half afraid to break it;
He'd got an Epilogue, and I muſt ſpeak it.---
All means he fain would try, if not too late,
Still to avert his dread, impending fate.
Sad viſions, too, diſtract his anxious brain;
Rumours of ills, that wait the ſcribbling train.
'Tis ſaid your taſte for Comedy is flown;
That darling child you once were proud to own:
That Shakeſpear's fires no more your ſenſes rouze;
Congreve and Vanbrugh ſeldom fill the houſe;
While childiſh pageants ſtuff the crouded ſcene,
No mortal even gueſſing what they mean;
Fierce wars they wage, and dreadful battles try,
With bloodleſs conflict: all one knows not why.
Till by the friendly banners we are told,
There Macedon's, there Perſia's chief behold!
Juſt as on ſigns th' informing words declare,
This the Red Lion; that is the Black Bear.
Queens, and their maids of honor, wait in vain.
Till their mute lovers ſhall their ſuit explain.
They'd often heard, indeed from Greece and Rome,
That

That love was blind; but ne'er that he was dumb.
There too thoſe motly, female, manly graces,
With almoſt all things naked, but their faces;
Thoſe modern Picts, at whom we gaze with wonder;
While their keen falchions cut whole ranks aſunder.
Great Ruſty-fuſti's triumphs thus we greet;
Six holy Roman emp'rors breathleſs at her feet.
Nor leſs the neighb'ring temples of Apollo,
With equal ſteps the bright example follow.
There beardleſs warriors ſqueak each other's doom;
And ſilken Vandals plan the fall of Rome.
There demigods by entrechâts advance,
And Carthage flames demoliſh'd in a dance.
Arms claſh, loud thunders roar, and chariots rattle;
While jarring trumpets animate the battle.

Now critics, if you're angry think on theſe,
And ſpare the bard who ſtrives at leaſt to pleaſe:
Judge, and be judg'd, in anger juſt, I pray:
Audire alteram partem is fair play.
In ſuch a cauſe, altho' the taſk be hard;
I'll be myſelf of counſel for our bard;
I've ſuch authorities as none refuſes,
Fleta's, and Coke's, and Blackſtone's of the Muſes;
Farqhuar and Rowe, and Wycherly we boaſt!
And Avon's mighty ſeer, himſelf a hoſt!

Yet, for I feel my female fears increaſe,
Tho' arm'd for war, *yet ſtill I wiſh* for peace:
We own your pow'r, confeſs your wond'rous ſway,
Whom all our great dramatic realms obey:

No

No merit we can claim, till you befriend it,
Wit is not wit, unleſs your taſte commend it:
From th' Author's anvil a mere ſluggiſh maſs;
Your plaudits ſtamp the coin, and bid it paſs.
By your mild ſentence then decide our fate:
Far better to be good than to be great!
Like Britain's Monarch, act your generous parts,
And fix your empire, in our greatful hearts.

FINIS.

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